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THE MEANING OF ART.

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There is a remarkable verse in the Atharva Veda which attributes all that is great in the human world to superfluity. It says :

Ritam satyam tapo rashtram sramo dharmascha karmacha,
Bhûtam bhavishyat ucchiste vîryam lakshmîrbalam bale.

Righteousness, truth, great endeavours, empire, religion, enterprise, heroism and prosperity, the past and the future dwell in the surpassing strength of the surplus.

The meaning of it is that man expresses himself through his superabundance which largely overlaps his absolute need.

The renowned Vedic commentator, Sáyanácharya, says :

Yajñe hutasishtasya odanasya sarvajagatkáranabhûta
Brahmábhedena stutih kriyate.

The food offering which is left over after the completion of sacrificial rites is praised because it is symbolical of Brahma, the original source of the universe.

According to this explanation, Brahma is boundless in his superfluity which inevitably finds its expression in the eternal world process. Here we have the doctrine of the genesis of creation, and therefore of the origin of art. Of all living creatures in the world man has his vital and mental energy vastly in excess of his need, which urges him to work in various lines of creation for its own sake. Like Brahma himself, he takes joy in productions that are unnecessary to him, and therefore

representing his extravagance and not his hand-to-mouth penury. The voice that is just enough can speak and cry to the extent needed for every day use, but that which is abundant sings, and in it we find our joy. Art reveals man's wealth of life, which seeks its freedom in forms of perfection which are an end in themselves.

All that is inert and inanimate is limited to the bare fact of existence. Life is perpetually creative because it contains in itself that surplus which ever overflows the boundaries of the immediate time and space, restlessly pursuing its adventure of expression in the varied forms of self-realisation. Our living body has its vital organs that are important in maintaining its efficiency, but this body is not a mere convenient sac for the purpose of holding stomach, heart, lungs and brains; it is an image,—its highest value is in the fact that it communicates its personality. It has colour, shape and movement, most of which belong to the superfluous, that are needed only for self-expression and not for self-preservation.

At the root of all creation there is a paradox, a logical contradiction. Its process is in the perpetual reconciliation of two contrary forces. We have already said that the natural urging of the surplus, the *ucchista,* is the motive force of all that makes for perfection. But the boundless overflow must yield to the bounds of finitude for its manifestation. Truth must become real by the definition of the infinite. We have two contradictory utterances in the Upanishad about the origin of all things. On the one hand, it has been said :

Anandádhyeva khalvimáni bhûtani jayante.

The universe has come out of joy.

On the other hand, there is the verse which says :

Sa tapo'tapyatah sa tapastaptvá sarvamasrijat yadidam kincha.

God made penance, and with the heat generated therefrom he created all that there is.

The freedom of joy and the restraint of *tapasyá,* both are equally true in the creative expression of Brahma.

This limitation of the unlimited is personality: God is personal where he creates.

Kavirmanîshî paribhûh svayambhûryatatathyato'rthan
Vyadadhát sháswatibhyah samábhyah.

Where he dispenses the inner necessities of existence in an accurate measure and for all time he is the poet, the lord of mind, the sovereign power, the self-creator.

He accepts the limits of his own law and the play goes on which is this world whose reality is in its relation to the Person. Things are distinct not in their essence but in their appearance, in other words, in their relation to one to whom they appear. This is art, the truth of which is not in substance or logic, but in expression. Abstract truth may belong to science and metaphysics, but the world of reality belongs to Art.

The world as an art is the play of the Supreme Person revelling in image making. Try to find out the ingredients of the image—they elude you, they never reveal to you the eternal secret of appearance. In your effort to capture life as expressed in living tissue, you will find carbon, nitrogen and many other things utterly unlike life, but never life itself. The appearance does not offer any commentary of itself through its material. You may call it *Maya* and pretend to disbelieve it, but the great artist, the *Máyávin,* is not hurt. For art is *Maya,* it has no other explanation but that it seems to be what it is. It never tries to conceal its evasiveness, it mocks even its own definition and plays the game of hide and seek through its constant flight in changes.

And thus life, which is an incessant explosion of freedom, finds its metre in a continual falling back in death. Every day is a death, every moment even. If not, there would be an amorphous desert of deathlessness eternally dumb and still. So life is *máyá,*—as moralists love to say, it *is* and *is not.* All that we find in it is the rhythm through which it shows itself. Are rocks and minerals any better? Has not science shown us the fact that the ultimate difference between one element and another is only that of rhythm? The fundamental distinction of gold from mercury lies merely in the difference of rhythm in

their respective atomic constitution, like the distinction of the king from his subject which is not in their different constituents, but in the different metres of their situation and circumstance. There you find behind the scene the Artist, the Magician of rhythm, who imparts an appearance of substance to the unsubstantial.

What is this rhythm? It is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction. This is the creative force in the hand of the artist. So long as words remain in uncadenced prose form, they do not give any lasting feeling of reality. The moment they are taken and put into rhythm they vibrate into a radiance. It is the same with the rose. In the pulp of its petals you may find everything that went to make the rose, but the rose which is *máyá,* an image, is lost; its finality which has the touch of the infinite is gone. The rose appears to me to be still, but because of its metre of composition it has a lyric of movement within that stillness, which is the same as the dynamic quality of a picture that has a perfect harmony. It produces a music in our consciousness by giving it a swing of motion synchronous with its own. Had the picture consisted of a disharmonious aggregate of colours and lines, it would be deadly still.

In perfect rhythm, the art-form becomes like the stars which in their seeming stillness are never still, like a motionless flame that is nothing but movement. A great picture is always speaking, but news from a newspaper, even of some tragic happening, is still-born. Some news may be a mere commonplace in the obscurity of a journal; but give it a proper rhythm and it will never cease to shine. That is art. It has the magic wand which gives undying reality to all things it touches, and relates them to the personal being in us. We stand before its productions and say : I know you as I know myself, you are real.

Let me repeat here my remark about the function of art from a previous paper of mine : "When we talk of æsthetics in relation to arts we must know that it is not about beauty in its ordinary meaning but in that deeper meaning which a poet has expressed in his utterance : truth is beauty, beauty truth. An artist may paint a picture of a decrepit person not pleasing to

the eye, and yet we call it perfect when we become deeply conscious of its reality."

Hopeless tragedies of life can never technically be called beautiful, but when appearing on the background of art they delight us because of the convincingness of their reality. It only proves that every object which fully asserts its existence to us because of its inherent finality, is beautiful; it is what is called in Sanscrit *manohara,* the stealer of the mind,—the mind which stands between the knower and the known. We have our primal sympathy for all things that exist, for when realised they stimulate the consciousness of our own existence. The fact that we exist has its truth in the fact that everything else does exist.

The *I am* in me realises its own extension, its own infinity whenever it truly realises something else. Unfortunately, owing to our limitations and a thousand and one pre-occupations, a great part of our world, though closely surrounding us, is far away from the lamp-post of our attention; it is dim, it passes by us, a caravan of shadows, like the landscape seen in the night from the window of an illuminated railway compartment: the passenger knows that the outside world exists, that it is important, but for the time being the railway carriage for him is far more significant. If among the innumerable objects in this world there be a few that come under the full illumination of our soul and thus assume reality for us, they constantly cry to our creative mind for a permanent representation. They belong to the same domain as the desire of ours which represents the longing for the permanence of our own self.

I do not mean to say that things to which we are bound by the tie of self-interest have the inspiration of reality: on the contrary, these are eclipsed by the shadow of our own self. The servant is not more real to us than the beloved. The narrow emphasis of utility diverts our attention from the complete man to the merely useful man. The thick label of market price obliterates the ultimate value of reality.

It has been said in the *Vrihad-Aranyaka*:

The desire for the son does not make him dear, the son is dear for the sake of the self.

That is to say, in the son the father becomes conscious of a reality which is immediately and profoundly within him. He is delighted not because his son is perfect and beautiful, but because his son is indubitably real to him,—our joy, as I have said before, being the disinterested perception of the real. This is the source of our delight in all arts and literature, where reality is presented to us on the pedestal of its own absolute value.

All the deep impressions in our mind are accompanied by some emotions which set up their own variety of tremors in our consciousness. This agitation modulates our voice and movements and impels us to all creative display of colours, forms and sounds. This reminds me of the occasion when I saw inscribed on the wall of a school building, in exaggerated characters: "Bipin is an egregious ass!" It amused me, and at the same time offered me an answer to the question, *what is art.*

No one takes the least trouble to proclaim the information that Bipin is tall, or that he suffers from a cold. Ordinarily our mind is soberly grey in its impression of Bipin. But when we love him or hate him, the fact of Bipin's existence becomes glowingly evident on the agitated background of passion. Then our mind can no longer remain neutral; it detaches the idea of Bipin from the immense multitude of what is non-significant to us, and according to its own power our mind tries to make him as unavoidably real to others as he is to ourselves.

The boy who angrily longed to give permanence to his indignant estimate of Bipin and make it universally accepted had nothing but his inadequate charcoal and ineffectual training, whereas his forefathers of the primitive age, when excited to anger, not only could give vent to it effectively in action, but also in an expression of gorgeous ferocity by the help of pigments, feathers, tinsel and war dance. That writing on the school wall, craving immortality, sadly begged for colours and rhythmic lines to be like its glorious congeners, the fresco paintings of the world-renowned caves, where the artists attempted to emphasise their estimate of certain personalities, and of sundry incidents, into permanence.

As art creations are emotional representations of facts and

ideas they can never be like the product of a photographic camera which is passively receptive of lights and shadows in all their indiscriminate details. Our scientific mind is unbiassed; it accepts facts with a cold-blooded curiosity that has no preference. The artistic mind is strongly biassed, and that bias not only guides it in its fastidious selection of the subject, but also in that of its details. It throws coloured lights of emphasis on its theme in such a manner that it attains a character which clearly distinguishes it from its fellows. The skylarks of science offer corroboration of their truth through their similarity, the skylarks of artists and poets through their dissimilarity. If Shelley's poem on this bird were just like that of Wordsworth, it should have been rejected for its lack of truth.

As art embodies our personal estimate of a thing, or character, or circumstance, the artist in his work does not follow nature in its capacious heterogeneity, but his own human nature which is selective. By leaving out whatever is non-essential for his own purpose of expression and intensifying what is significant, he brings out the truth of his creation much more vividly than he would if he copied actuality which is strictly impartial to whatever exists. The wholeness of God's creation is immensely vast and it is not possible for any detail to be too defiantly discrepant in its relation to it. But the background of human expression is small and therefore it is never possible to accomodate nature's details in our art compositions. It is childish to expect the primæval forest in the perspective of our garden plot, or an illustration of natural history in our works which modulate fact to the tune of our personality.

Once the question had been asked to me as to the place I assigned to music in my theory of art. I am bound to answer it, and I take this opportunity to offer my explanation.

Music is the most abstract of all arts, as mathematics is in the region of science. In fact, these two have a deep relationship with each other. Mathematics as the logic of number and dimension is the basis of our scientific knowledge. When taken out of its concrete associations with cosmic phenomena and

reduced to symbols it reveals its grand structural majesty, the inevitableness of its own perfect concord. But there is also such a thing as the magic of mathematics which works at the root of all appearances, producing harmony of unity,—the cadence of inter-relation of the parts bringing them under the dominion of the whole. This rhythm of harmony has been extracted from its usual context and exhibited through the medium of sound. And thus the pure essence of expressiveness in existence is offered in music. In sound it finds the least resistance and has a freedom unencumbered by the burden of facts and thoughts. It gives it a power to arouse in us an intense feeling of reality; it seems to lead us into the soul of all things and make us feel the very breath of inspiration flowing from the supreme creative joy.

In the pictorial, plastic and verbal arts the object and our feelings with regard to it are closely associated, like the rose and its perfume. In music the feeling, extracted in sound, becomes itself an independent object. It assumes a tune-form which is definite, but a meaning which is indefinable and yet grips our mind with a sense of absolute truth.

There came a time, centuries ago, in Bengal, when the divine love drama that had its eternal play in human souls was vividly revealed by a personality radiating its intimate realisation of God. The mind of a whole people was stirred by the vision of the world as an instrument through which sounded our invitation to the meeting of bliss. The ineffable mystery of God's love-call taking shape in an endless panorama of colours and forms, finding its chorus in the symphony of human affections, inspired activity in a music that overflowed the restrictions of classical conventionalism. Our *kirtan* music in Bengal came to its being like a star flung up by a burning whirlpool of emotion in the heart of a whole people.

There come in our history occasions when the consciousness of a large multitude becomes suddenly illumined with the recognition of something which rises far above the triviality of daily happenings. Such an occasion there was when the voice

of Buddha reached distant shores across all physical and moral impediments. Then our life and our world found their profound meaning of reality in their relation to the central person who offered us emancipation of love. And men, in order to make this great human experience ever memorable, determined to do the impossible; they made rocks to speak, stones to sing, caves to remember; the cry of joy and hope took immortal forms along hills and deserts, across barren solitudes and populous cities. A gigantic creative endeavour built up its triumph in stupendous carvings, defying obstacles that were overwhelming. Such heroic activity over the greater part of the Eastern continent clearly answers the question: *What is art ?*—It is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the real.

But the individual mind according to its temperament and training has its own recognition of reality in some of its special aspects. We can see from the Gandhara figures of Buddha that the artistic influence of Greece put its emphasis on the scientific aspect, on anatomical accuracy, while the purely Indian mind dwelt on the symbolic aspect and tried to give expression to the soul of Buddha, never acknowledging the limitations of realism. For the adventurous spirit of the great European sculptor, Rodin, the most significant aspect of reality is the unceasing struggle of the incomplete for its freedom from the fetters of imperfection, whereas before the naturally introspective mind of the Eastern artist the real appears in its ideal form of fulfilment.

Therefore, when we talk of such a fact as Indian Art, it indicates some truth based upon the Indian tradition and temperament. At the same time we must know that there is no such thing as absolute caste restriction in human cultures; they ever have the power to combine and produce new variations, and such combinations have been going on for ages proving the truth of the deep unity of human psychology. It is admitted that in Indian art the Persian element found no obstacles, and there are signs of various other alien influences. China and Japan have no hesitation in acknowledging their debt to India in their artistic and spiritual growth of life. Fortunately for our civilisations all such intermingling happened when professional art critics were not rampant and artists were not constantly nudged by the

warning elbow of classifiers in their choice of inspiration. Our artists were never tiresomely reminded of the obvious fact that they were Indian; and in consequence they had the freedom to be naturally Indian in spite of all the borrowings that they indulged in.

The sign of greatness in great geniuses is their enormous capacity for borrowing, very often without their knowing it; they have unlimited credit in the world market of culture. Only mediocrities are ashamed and afraid of borrowing, for they do not know how to pay back the debt in their own coin. Even the most foolish of critics does not dare blame Shakespeare for what he openly appropriated from outside his own national inheritance. The human soul is proud of its comprehensive sensitiveness; it claims its freedom of entry everywhere when it is fully alive and awake. We congratulate ourselves on the fact, and consider it a sign of our being alive in soul, that European thoughts and literary forms found immediate hospitality in Bengali literature from the very beginning of its contact with our mind. It ushered in a great revolution in the realm of our literary expression.

Enormous changes have taken place, but our Indian soul has survived the shock and has vigorously thriven upon this cataclysm. It only shows that though human mentality, like the earth's atmosphere, has undoubtedly different temperatures in different geographical zones, yet it is not walled up into impassable compartments and the circulation of the common air over the entire globe continues to have its wholesome effect. So let us take heart and make daring experiments, venture out into the open road in the face of all risks, go through experiences in the great world of human mind defying unholy prohibitions preached by prudent little critics, laughing at them when in their tender solicitude for our safety they ask our artists to behave like good children and never to cross the threshold of their school-room.

Fearfully trying always to conform to a conventional type is a sign of immaturity. Only in babies is individuality of physiognomy blurred, and therefore personal distinction not strongly marked. Childishness is a mentality that can

easily be generalised : children's babbling has the same sound-tottering everywhere, their toys are very nearly similar. But adult age is difficult of classification, it is composed of individuals who claim recognition of their personal individuality which is shown not only in its own uniqueness of manner but also in its own special response to all stimulations from outside.

I strongly urge our artists vehemently to deny their obligation carefully to produce something that can be labelled as Indian art according to some old world mannerism. Let them proudly refuse to be herded into a pen like branded beasts that are treated as cattle and not as cows. Science is impersonal, it has its one aspect which is merely universal and therefore abstract; but art is personal and, therefore, through it the universal manifests itself in the guise of the individual, physiology expresses itself in physiognomy, philology in literature. Science is a passenger in a railway train of generalisation; there reasoning minds from all directions come to make their journey together in a similar conveyance. Art is a solitary pedestrian, who walks alone among the multitude, continually assimilating various experiences, unclassifiable and uncatalogued.

There was a time when human races lived in comparative segregation and therefore the art adventurers had their experience within a narrow range of limits deeply-cut grooves of certain common characteristics. But to-day that range has vastly widened, claiming from us a much greater power of receptivity than what we were compelled to cultivate in former ages. If to-day we have a living soul that is sensitive to ideas and to beauty of form, let it prove its capacity by accepting all that is worthy of acceptance, not according to some blind injunction of custom or fashion, but in following one's instinct for eternal value—the instinct which is a God-given gift to all real artists. Even then our art is sure to have a quality which is Indian, but it must be an inner quality and not an artificially fostered formalism, and therefore not be too obtrusively obvious and abnormally self-conscious.

When in the name of Indian art we cultivate with deliberate aggresiveness a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our soul under idiosyncracies unearthed

from buried centuries. These are like masks with exaggerated grimaces, that fail to respond to the ever changing play of life.

Art is not a gorgeous sepulchre immovably brooding over a lonely eternity of vanished years. It belongs to the procession of life, making constant adjustment with surprises, exploring unknown shrines of reality along its path of pilgrimage to a future which is as different from the past as the tree from the seed. Art represents the inexhaustible magnificence of creative spirit; it is generous in its acceptance and generous in its bestowal; it is unique in its manner and universal in its appeal; it is hospitable to the All because it has the wealth which is its own; its vision is new though its view may be old; it carries its special criterion of excellence within itself and therefore contemptuously refuses to be brow-beaten into conformity with a rhetoric manufactured by those who are not in the secret of the subtle mysteries of creation, who want to simplify through their academic code of law that which is absolutely simple through its spontaneity.

The art ideal of a people may take fixed root in a narrow soil of tradition developing a vegetable character, producing a monotonous type of leaves and flowers in a continuous round of repetitions. Because it is not disturbed by a mind which ever seeks the unattained, and because it is held firm by a habit which piously discourages allurements of all adventures, it is neither helped by the growing life of the people nor does it help to enrich that life. It remains confined to coteries of specialists who nourish it with delicate attention and feel proud of the ancient flavour of its aristoratic exclusiveness. It is not a stream that flows through and fertilises the soil, but a rare wine stored in a dark cellar underground, acquiring a special stimulation through its artificially nurtured, barren antiquity. In exchange for a freedom of movement which is the prerogative of vigorous youth, we may gain a static perfection of senility that has minted its wisdom into hard and rounded maxims. Unfortunately, there are those who believe it an advantage for a child to be able to borrow its grandparents' age and be spared the trouble and risk of growing, and think that it is a sign of wealthy respectability for an artist lazily to cultivate a

monotonously easy success by means of some hoarded patrimony of tradition.

And yet we may go too far if we altogether reject tradition in the cultivation of art, and it is an incomplete statement of truth to say that habits have the sole effect of deadening our mind. The tradition which is helpful is like a channel that helps the current to flow. It is open where the water runs onward, guarding it only where there is danger in deviation. The bee's life in its channel of habit has no opening,—it revolves within a narrow circle of perfection. Man's life has time-honoured institutions which are its organised habits. When these act as enclosures, then the result may be perfect, like a bee-hive of wonderful precision of form, but unsuitable for the mind which has unlimited possibilities of progress.

Before I close my address let me take this opportunity to ask our artists to realise the greatness of their vocation : it is to take a creative part in the festival of life, the festival which is to give expression to the infinite in man. In our everyday world we live in poverty; our resources have to be husbanded with care; our strength becomes exhausted and we come to our God as beggars. On festival days, we display our wealth and say to Him that we are even as He is; and we are not afraid to spend. This is the day when we bring to Him our gift of joy. For we truly meet God, when we come to Him with our offerings and not our wants, and such offerings need Art for its vehicle.

I need have no anxiety about the great world to which I have been born. The sun does not wait to be trimmed by me. But from the early morning all my thoughts are occupied by the little world of my *self*. Its importance is owing to the fact that I have a world given to me which is *mine,* which depends for its perfection on my own creative soul. It is great because I have the power to make it worthy of its relationship with me; it is great, because by its help I can offer my own hospitality to the God of all the world.

In the morning, the sun comes out brightly, in the dusk the stars hold up their lights. But these are not sufficient for us. Until we light our own little lamps, the world of lights in the sky is in vain, and unless we make our own preparations, the wealth of the world preparation remains waiting like a lute for the finger touch. But preparation is going on all the world over, beginning with the age of the cave man down to our time. Man the artist is inviting God the artist to his home. God dwells in his own creation and it is expected of man that he also must create his environment, his own dwelling place, which should be worthy of his soul. For a perfect creation the artist in him must have his freedom, the artist whose one object is perfection and not profit, who has the dignity of pride that despises material success and the heroism that pursues the ideal of inner fulfilment against difficulty, discouragement and privation. And then his world gives a true response to God's world, like the sweetness in woman in answer to the greatness of her lover.

It is for the artist to remind the world that with the truth of our expression we grow in truth. When the man-made world is less an expression of man's creative soul than a mechanical device for some purpose of power, then it hardens itself, acquiring proficiency at the cost of the subtle suggestiveness of living growth. In his creative activities man makes nature instinct with his own life and love. But with his utilitarian energies he fights nature, banishes her from his world, deforms and defiles her with the ugliness of his ambitions.

This world of man's own manufacture with its discordant shrieks and swagger, impresses on him the scheme of a universe which has no touch of the person and therefore no ultimate significance. All the great civilisations that have become extinct must have come to their end through such wrong expression of humanity; through parasitism on a gigantic scale bred by wealth, by man's clinging reliance on material resources; through a scoffing spirit of denial, of negation, robbing us of our means of sustenance in the path of truth.

It is for the artist to proclaim his faith in the everlasting YES,—to say: "I believe that there is an ideal hovering over

and permeating the earth, an ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move."

I believe that this vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere in this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ear without our knowing it. It tunes our harp of life which sends our aspiration in music beyond the finite, not only in prayers and hopes, but also in temples which are flames of fire in stone, in pictures which are dreams made everlasting, in the dance which is ecstatic meditation in the still centre of movement.

THE DYNAMIC ELEMENT IN INDIAN RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

By Prof. Carlo Formichi.

II.

Vedic texts repeatedly say that gods are *parokshapriyáh,* namely, that they love mystery, the symbolic, that which cannot be easily grasped. The more obscure a prayer, the more is it likely to please a god. There is, therefore, a kind of emulation among poets as to who will succeed in chanting the praise of a divine being in the most impenetrable way. That the first Indian poets should have ascribed such bad taste to their gods, is certainly a calamity to poor posterity bound to investigate and interpret those poets' compositions, and it is no wonder if European scholars, who have vainly strained their brains to solve the riddle of the Vedic Sphinx, should have gone so far as to compare the odd symbols and the absurd mania for identifying things which utterly differ from one another, with the sad incongruities and insane expressions that are heard in an asylum. One has only to open Schroeder's *Indiens Literature and Cultur in historischer Entwicklung,* at page 112, or Oldenberg's *Weltanschauung der Brahmana-Texte,* at page 2, in order to see that in Europe Vedic symbolism has really been deemed pure madness and, as such, doomed to be studied from the standpoint of psychiatry. Still, we maintain that among the heap of so much dross, the purest gold is to be found.

Let us take, for example, the hymn I, 164, ascribed to Dirghatamas. It contains 52 stanzas, and is dedicated to all the gods. It is overfilled with such impenetrable riddles that the author, namely, Dirghatamas, may rightly be proud of them. If it be true that gods like dark symbols and hate clearness, Dirghatamas could hardly have pleased them better. To give a sample of his odd composition, here is a translation of the first three stanzas :

The middle brother of this amiable hoary *hotar* is the devourer. His third brother has his back smeared with butter. In him I recognized the ancestor who has seven sons.

Seven are those that yoke the one-wheeled cart ; a horse that has got seven names draws it. The wheel on which all beings stand, has three naves, never wears out, is insuperable.

Seven have ascended the cart ; seven horses draw the seven-wheeled cart ; seven sisters cheer it as the one in which the seven names of the cows have been deposited.

Who are the three brothers mentioned in the first stanza? The eldest one is the old firmament with its sun and stars, namely, the heavenly fire; the second brother is the atmospheric fire, namely, lightning; the third brother is the sacrificial fire in which libations of butter are shed. The sun in heaven, lightning in the atmosphere and fire on earth, though apparently three things, are in reality one and the same thing,—nothing but fire. There is a substantial unity in the variety of cosmic phenomena. Our hymn wants to point out the unity of God and from the outset strikes the fundamental note. This is the explanation set forth by Professor Deussen (*Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* I, I, page 106, 108).

But Professor Geldner, in his recent most valuable translation of the Rigveda, rightly objects: why at all should the lightning be called the devourer? Such epithet may rather be claimed by the sacrificial fire, which no offerings can ever satiate. The three brothers remind us at once of the *áhavanîya, dakshina* and *gárhapatyágni.* The *dakshinágni* has its place always between the two other fires and receives the greater part of the offerings. This accounts for both the epithets of middle brother and devourer.

In spite of this enlightening interpretation of Professor Geldner, all doubts are far from being removed, for we are at a loss to account for the two epithets *amiable* and *hoary* given to the first fire, and for the description of the third one as having its back all smeared with butter. This description would rather suit the middle fire, namely, the *dakshinágni,* which, as we have seen, receives by far the greater part of the offered ghee. And who are the seven who yoke the one-wheeled cart? Whatever is the meaning of the horse that has got seven names? How to solve the riddle of the three-naved wheel?

Professor Deussen thinks that in the seven we have to see the heavenly *hotars* that yoke the cart of the firmament; in the horse that has got seven names, the sun and the *ádityas,* being in number seven; in the three-naved wheel the firmament again. According to Professor Geldner, on the contrary, the seven are the solar steeds; the horse that has got seven names the seven Harits which sometimes are represented by Etasa alone; the three-naved wheel the symbol of the three seasons.

In the third stanza it is clear that the poet is playing with the number seven, but the discrepancies of opinion among the interpreters are still greater in determining what each group of seven represents.

If we went on examining the philological discussions on the remaining 49 stanzas I am sure I should wear out the patience of my readers, as well as my own.

What is the use of lingering in such a jungle of incongruous symbols? Anyhow, it would be quite unfair to think that only Vedic theologians are to blame on account of their abstruseness. Is the ritual of the Christian religion free from abstruseness? Is not the priest of every religion busy giving a symbolic meaning to every detail of a rite? The wonder is that among the absurdities of the Rigvedic hymn (I,164) we find sparks of genius and thoughts so deep that we are at a loss to explain how they could be derived from the same brain. In spite of the poet's deliberate intention of concealing his thought in a thick darkness, he cannot help betraying himself, from time to time. The abstruse theologian occasionally, and all of a sudden, transfigures himself into a winged poet, into a clear-sighted seer, only to resume his wonted mask immediately after its momentary lifting.

We read in the fourth stanza:

> Who could ever see the First-born, since those that have no bones support those that have them? Where is the vital breath, the blood, the *Self* of the Earth?
>
> Shall we ever find the wise man whom we may question about this mystery?

To say that those who have no bones support those that

have them, simply means that this material world has its prop in a spiritual one, and proceeds from it. Therefore, the First-born, being the offspring not of a living being framed with solid matter, but of a transcendent entity, could by no means be seen by anybody. To speak of the breath, the blood and the Self of Earth, simply means that already in those remote times, the wonderful correspondence between the drop and the ocean, man and the world, the micro and the macrocosm was no longer a secret.

The poet proceeds :

> Ignorant as I am I go on questioning those who know, that I may learn who is the One, never born, that propped these six quarters of the universe ?

Our hymn, as I said, is dedicated to all the gods, and it is strange indeed that in it God should be conceived as one. Of this fact only one reason can be given, namely, that polytheism was nearly dying and pantheism was asserting itself more and more. This one God our poet thinks to be now the sun, now father Heaven joined to mother Earth. Overwhelmed with wonder he speaks of the wheel of the universe that turns round without ever wearing out, and of the eye of the sun that finds its way even through the thickest darkness. The sun has *Ushas* as his mother, but who is his father? The sun has got no father. Here is another mystery that announces God's spirit. Seasons go and then come back again ; days, likewise, die and are born anew ; and why this is so, we know not. He who does not know the Father will never eat of the sweet berry that is at the top of the tree of wisdom, whereon all birds build their nests and brood over their eggs :

> *Yasmin vrikshe madhvadah suparná nivisante suvate chádhi visve,*
> *Tasyedahuh pippalam svadvagre tannonnacadyah pitaram na veda.*
> 1,164,22.

God is one, God is the Father ! What more can we ask from the Rigveda ? The poet, like an eagle, has flown up to the highest region, but see how he hastens back to the morass in telling us that the Creator availed himself of the *jagat* metre in

order to dam the heavenly river, and discovered the sun and the *rathantara* melody.

Again he soars into the heights when he says: Though life, breathing, lies motionless still swiftly it goes among the rivers. The soul of the dead man wanders wherever it likes: what is immortal has got the same womb as that which is mortal:

Anacchaye turnagatu jîvam ejad dhruvam madhya á pastyánám,
Jivomrtasya charati svadhabhir amartya martye na saynoih. 1,164,30.

Thanks to Professor Geldner's philological acumen we are now able to understand the meaning of this and of the two other following stanzas. *Though life, breathing, lies motionless, still swiftly it goes among the rivers,* namely, the body of a sleeping man lies motionless and differs from a corpse only because it breathes, but his soul swiftly wanders everywhere as soon as he begins to dream. The dream reveals the independence of the soul, for this latter may leave the motionless body and go wherever it likes. On the contrary, the body is moving while the body is awake, and the soul still lies among the blood, the lymph and the other humours of the body, which like rivers flow through it. The miracle of the soul leaving the body and going wherever it likes in the state of dreaming, leads to the belief in the similar miracle of the soul leaving the body in death and going wherever it likes. This body is mortal but it is the abode of the immortal soul: body and soul have only one womb.

Was not the spirit of the Upanishads hovering over Dirghatamas while he composed this and the two other stanzas which run thus:

I have seen the shepherd going his way here and there without ever becoming weary. Clad in the waters flowing in the same and different directions, he wanders in the interior of beings. (1,164,31).

Heaven is my father, my begetter, in him is my navel; this great Earth is my mother, my umbilical cord. My womb is in these two immense shells, wherein the Father deposited his own daughter's embryo. (1,164,33).

By the shepherd we have to understand the wind on one side, namely, on the cosmic side, and the breath in man on the

other, namely, on the microcosmic, human side. As the wind straggles among the atmospheric waters, so the breath also roams among the bodily humours. The equation *wind=breath* leads the poet to the belief that the whole being of man finds its counterpart in this great world. This is why he calls Heaven his own father, and Earth his own mother. We already saw that in the fourth stanza the breath, the blood and the Self of Earth are mentioned, so that we are justified in detecting in the Rigveda the notion of the substantial identity of man and world, not so much in its beginning, but in its steadily growing.

Again the poet's wings get tired and the priest, mindful of the job whereon he lives, awakens, and is loud in extolling the altar as the utmost boundary of Earth, the sacrifice as the navel of the world, and so on.

Our hymn closes with the eulogy of *Vách,* and, amongst a heap of absurdities and abstruse symbols, bequeaths to us two priceless diamonds in stanzas 45 and 46 :

> Language consists of four fourths which are well known to clever seers. These, however, conceal three fourths of it and do not circulate them ; so that men speak only one fourth of the possible human language.

I availed myself of this stanza when I had the rare privilege of introducing Rabindranath Tagore to my countrymen in Milan, just to tell them that the modern seer of India does not follow the ancient Rigvedic sages in their cruel withholding from the world three-fourths of possible language. He has broken their secret, he has circulated among men those other three-fourths, he has found out the expressions that allow us to speak of God, so as to be sure that human language has given its all.

Anyhow, we cannot help admiring the idea of Dirghatamas that human language is only the fourth part of the possible language and as such is limited, imperfect, and constrained to split the ineffable unity of the Universe into fragments. We ought to have three other fourths of language that we might be able to express in words the All-One. But, alas, these three-fourths belong to the immortal gods and are withheld from men The Purusha also, as we shall see hereafter, is said to be divided

into four parts, of which only one is distributed among men, and the three others among immortal beings.

It is, then, clear that, in Dirghatamas' hymn, polytheism has given way to the intuition of the fundamental unity of cosmic phenomena and of the wonderful correspondence between world and man, and that these lofty thoughts are making their way through a crowd of abstruse symbols aiming at keeping alive complicated ceremonies and sacrificial rites which gave a livelihood to a whole class of men : the priests.

They go about speaking of Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, when He only is the divine, beautiful-winged bird. The One Being sages call by multifarious names : they style Him Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.

Professor Deussen is perfectly right in saying that until the famous sentence of the Upanishads, *tat tvam asi,* India did not utter more epoch-making words than these of Dirghatamas :

Ekam sad, viprá bahudhá vadanti.

There is still another *versus memorialis* in the Rigveda :

Kasmai deváya havishá vidhema?

That is to say, the author of hymn X, 121, asks : *To which other God shall we offer our sacrifices than to the One God who in the beginning created all beings?* He, at first, created the waters including all germs, and in these waters he was born again as a golden embryo *together with the sacrifice* in order to become the sole God among Gods, nay, their vital spirit. Immortality and death are his reflection; all that breathes and closes the eyes acknowledges Him as its lord; to his laws, which are laws of truth, all do bow, even the gods; it is He who has measured the space allotted to the sky and to the Earth; It is He who stretching his arms has fixed the poles of Earth; He therefore, comprises the whole Universe and there can be nothing else beside Him. To this one sole Lord of creatures, namely, to Prajápati, libations must be offered to obtain victory over foes, and gifts of good things, of wealth.

Though this hymn is very important on account of the monotheism it professes, I cannot agree with those who put it at the same rank, and even above, Dirghatamas' composition. I grant that it is clearer and simpler, but from the philosophical point of view it is far below the audacity of thought we have admired in the few winged stanzas of Dirghatamas. It is true that all Gods must give way to the One God Prajápati, but the relation, formerly existing, between the gods and man, remains quite the same between this new one God and man, the relation, namely, of *do ut des* (I give that Thou shouldst give).

In the Vajasaneyi-Samhita, III, 50, Indra is described as saying to his worshipper: *dehi me, dadámi te.* I think that these words could be attributed to Prajápati quite as well. In Prajápati's hymn there is not the least hint at the correspondence of man and world, for Prajápati's almightiness rather makes the identification of poor man, imploring help and protection, with the Universe, quite impossible. The reference, moreover, to the sacrifice, which is said to have been born out of the primeval waters simultaneously with Prajápati, testifies how much the poet cherished the ritual institutions. Prajápati, as a name, means Lord of creatures and is an abstraction, but the God that appears behind this name is a personal God, very similar to any of the former Rigvedic gods. In short, the Prajápati-hymn may be styled preëminently monotheistic, as it fosters and paves the way to a monotheistic religious tendency, but it does not belong to the scanty number of those most precious compositions which represent laity not priesthood, and which have got in them the dynamical principles we are seeking for, and of which we found hints in the Dirghatamas hymn. In the next Brahmana-period Prajápati will preponderate and be the closest ally of the sacrificial rites and of the interests of the priesthood.

The new spiritual conquest that is apparent in many a Rigvedic hymn, is that the multifariousness of gods is only an illusion, and that there is only one God who is the creator and the lord of all things. It was vain to resist this new tendency, this radical reform, as it may be called. Every reform, we know well, is a threat against the interests of many, and these many try to the best of their abilities either to oppose it or at

least to adapt it to their conveniences. There was no chance to hold back the flood of monotheistic feeling in the last Rigvedic period; therefore, priests hastened to accept it, but at the same time tried to constrain it into the channels of their ceremonies and rites. They granted that God was to be conceived as one, but this one God had to be sought for, praised and worshipped, with the old mystical and symbolic mentality. They were quite aware of the impending danger that the laity might search after the one God with a rational, naturalistic, scientific method. And they also knew this method which trampling on the traditional lore, getting rid of all encumbrances of myths and ceremonies, led men to introspection and to the discovery of the substantial identity of the self in man and the Self in the Universe, in other words, of man and God.

Prajápati, accordingly, represents the clever conciliation of the old and new ideas, for he quite satisfies the monotheistic need and, at the same time, asserts the dependence of man on God, and, consequently, does not in the least check or impair the function of the heavy machine of ceremonies and rites. Prajápati was a priestly creation and, as such, doomed to be devoid of vitality and dynamic elements. Nay, priests needed a God even more congenial to their ideals than this Prajápati who, on account of his being born of the waters after having created them, and of his identity with Time, courts too much naturalistic and philosophic tendencies, and pays too little homage to old myths and traditional symbols.

Brahmanaspati or Brhaspati is the true minion of Vedic priesthood, the best personification of priestly ideals, beliefs, interests. His name means *lord of prayer*. Prayer is thought to have a magical influence on the gods, to be the force among the forces. Prayer is the food of the gods who, on account of it, cannot help granting boons to men. Prayer is, therefore, the basis of the Universe, and Brahmanaspati, who personifies it, is the true creator and lord of all things, the new one sole God that people are seeking for so eagerly. This priestly and irrational idea had a tremendous success, for it evolved into the posterior notion of the neutral Brahman, the rival of the lay, naturalistic and rational conception of *Atman*. We shall see hereafter that

they vied with each other in claiming to represent the main principle of the world, the soul of the Universe.

Brahmanaspati, like a smith, has cast together this world; *being* originated form *not-being;* Daksha was born of Aditi and Aditi in her turn, who afterwards engendered the Gods, was born of Daksha.

It is interesting to see how we here have the same cosmogonic conception as in the hymn to Prajápati X, 121, except that the names are changed only in order to do justice to traditional myths. Instead of the primeval waters wherein the Creator, who begot them, condescends to be born again as germ, we find the names of Aditi and Daksha, so that contact and alliance with the symbols of traditional mythology should not be lost. Aditi is the mother of the Adityas, namely, of Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Amsa, Bhaga, Daksha and Savitar; but she is here the representative of primeval matter, that is to say, of the waters which are at the same time the offspring and the womb of the Creator. It is clear that, from the philosophical point of view, this hymn X, 72, is inferior to the Prajápati hymn X, 121, in spite of the philosophic dress it tries to put on, in speaking of *being and not-being.*

Two dynamic hymns in the Rigveda I think I detect in the wonderful compositions of the poet Visvakarman (X, 81, 82). What at first puzzles us, is that both the poet who is singing the praises of his god and the god himself are called Visvakarman.

God as Visvakarman is the All-One; his eyes, faces, arms, feet are on every side. The seer, therefore, asks himself: where is the forest, where the tree, out of the wood of which Heaven and Earth could be framed? If Visvakarman is the All-One, he can have had no materials beside Himself, no prop, when he first created the world. The logical consequence is that in order to create this great world Viskakarman must have offered himself as a sacrifice, must have distributed his own body among beings and things. He, accordingly, permeates the world, is the world itself.

Seers understand this mystery if they only concentrate their thought on it. Let others babble about gods

different from Visvakarman: he only exists, he is the true lord of Speech (*Vách*), he duly protects men availing himself of good deeds. Not Prajápati, but Visvakarman, is the first germ deposited in the primeval waters. *You do not know,* the seer at last exclaims, *who really gave birth to these worlds: between Him and you something has been interposed. Hemmed in misty ignorance, the singers of hymns go about prattling in order to get a livelihood.*

Here we discover, at last, the golden vein, the dynamic current, that is no more to be lost sight of. Our poet, far from being satisfied with the notion of the unity of God, adds that God is the world itself, in the form of an immense man with numberless eyes, faces, arms, feet. Introspection is the only way to get at him and if between him and ourselves we do not suffer anything to be interposed, then we shall detect Him in our own Self. This is why God is called Visvakarman, and the poet who is singing his praise, likewise, Visvakarman. It is not the prayer, not the father of all creatures, that is worthy of personifying God. The universal *Karman* alone is the true representative of the All-One and deserves to be identified with God. The notion of *Karman* (action, energy, deed), which is to play such a decisive part side by side with *Brahman* and *Atman* and which will be an essential element of all later religions and philosophical systems of India, appears for the first time here, at the start of its glorious and millenary career. The notion of *Brahman* is mystic, and always associated with formalism and superstition. The notion of *átman,* as I hope to demonstrate later on, is naturalistic and rational, and its birthplace is to be sought more among laymen than among priests. The notion of *Karman* is half clerical, half lay, for *karman* means not only the sacrificial rite, but also any action, any deed of man.

Karman in the meaning of sacrifice is the natural ally of *Brahman,* in the meaning of action the natural ally of *átman.* We shall have occasion, later on, more amply to discuss this point, one of the most important points in the evolution of the religious thought in India. We have now only to ascertain what *karman* means in the name Visvakarman, and in the hymn X, 81. In the Rigvedic age, as is quite natural, *Karman*

is mainly employed in the sense of sacrifice; consequently, the author of the hymn X, 81 conceives the creation of the world as a great sacrifice, and the Creator as a wise *hotar* performing libations: *juhvad rsir hotá.* The same author, however, interprets this sacrifice in a quite different manner when he says that the Creator could offer only himself in sacrifice, as beyond his own body no other materials were available. It is only logical to infer that man, likewise, cannot offer God anything but his own self. Beyond ourselves there are no materials available for sacrifice; in other words the usual sacrifice (karman) consisting of offerings of butter, soma and so on, has no reason at all to exist. The one possible sacrifice, is that of oneself, the offering of one's own deed (karman).

This is the new interpretation I am bold enough to propose of the two Visvakarman hymns. It is, anyhow, quite certain that their author has trampled on traditional ideas, and done so deliberately. Has he not said that the usual singers, hemmed in misty ignorance, go about prattling just to get a livelihood? The doom of hollow Vedic formalism and abstruse symbolism has been uttered long before us by a Vedic seer himself. I listen to this solitary voice, to the song of this incomparable swan, and I altogether forget the croaking of the many Rigvedic crows. What is the use of paying attention to the vain efforts of geese's wings when there is an eagle soaring in the heights?

The word *Karman,* as we said, above all signifies sacrifice, but in the compound *sadhu-karma,* which appears in the last stanza, *karma* does not in the least imply any sense of ritual ceremony but simply means *action,* deed. This new God that has to protect men with good deeds is, indeed, the swallow that announces spring. Moreover, in the last stanza, Visvakarman is styled the lord of speech, or of prayer; thus receiving the epithet pre-eminently claimed by Brahmanaspati. Is this not a sign that our poet is trying to get rid of the clerical God and to substitute for him a new God, the lay and rational God, who, he well knows, is far from being the same as that invoked, praised and extolled by the crowd of singers seeking for a livelihood?

To conclude, I think that, in the Visvakarman-hymns, pantheism has asserted itself, that the way to a naturalistic and rational philosophy has been opened, that the new method of getting at the Godhead has been announced. This new method, in fact, I feel sure I detect in the verse :

Manishino manasa prchated u tad yad adhyatisthad bhuvanani dharayan

O seers, you have to search in your hearts in order to know what was the prop on which standing the Creator called into being all creatures.

This opinion of mine is confirmed by the parallel passage in X, 31 :

Let man go on seeking for wealth and honouring Gods with sacrifices, but at last let him converse with his own soul that he may, through his thought, attain to a superior wealth.

Pari chin marto dravinam mamanyad Rtasya patha namasa vivaset,
Uta svena kratuna sam vadeta sreyamsam daksam namasa jagrbhyat.

We are authorised to consider this stanza as a commentary on Visvakarman's expression *manasa prchata* by the fact that this same hymn X, 31 repeats in its seventh stanza the whole first verse of stanza 4 of the Visvakarman-hymn : *Where is the forest, where the tree, out of the wood of which the Gods framed Heaven and Earth?*

FOLK-LORE OF GARHWAL

By Tara Dutt Gariola.

Some years ago, the Rev. E. S. Oakley of Almora delivered a very thoughtful lecture on the folk-lore of Kumaon and discussed the subject in its various aspects. He showed how the folk-lore of Kumaon resembled that of other parts of India, and even of Europe in many respects. This is mainly due to the fact, as Mr. Oakley put it, that "men are closely related, in spite of their accidental differences, and that in the great purpose of God all nations of mankind are made of one blood, of one heart and mind, to dwell together on the earth, and fulfil one high united destiny."

While the Europeans, generally, consider the Indians as an inferior race, the intelligentsia, the townsmen of India, look down upon the masses, the rural population, as ignorant and superstitious rustics, not fit for social intercourse. In the same way, the higher castes of Hindus look down upon the depressed classes as untouchables, whose very shadow would pollute them. I am convinced that it is only by a proper study of the history as revealed in the folk-lore of the various peoples of the world, that true sympathy and mutual goodwill can be established and they can live in brotherly love together, inspired by feelings of common fellowship for fulfilling one united destiny.

It is painful to find that the western scholars who have written on this subject usually fail to bring a true sympathy to bear on their treatment of it. They seem to delight in showing up its childish or ludicrous aspects. And Indian folk lore, in particular, is often judged in a jeering spirit through their own prejudices. However, as it is difficult for a foreigner to understand the underlying spirit, I do not blame these writers.

As the folk-lore of a country is largely moulded by its environment, therefore, for a proper understanding of the folk-lore of Garhwal it is necessary to know the peculiarities of the

Garhwal hills. This hilly country extends from the holy Hardwar to the sacred shrines of Gangotri, Jumnotri, Badrinath and Kedernath. It contains some of the highest mountains in the world, the peaks of which are perpetually shrouded by snow and mist. The most sacred rivers of the Hindus—the Ganges and the Jumna—take their rise in these hills. From the Vedic times down to the present, these hills, formerly known as *Uttarakhanda,* have been held in the highest reverence by all Hindus. On the great *Kailash* mountain stands the throne of Siva, while myriads of gods, goddesses and fairies frequent its high summits and deep glens.

The *Vedas* and the *Puranas* are full of legends of the great battles fought between gods and demons in the Uttarakhand Himalayas. The adventures of the Pandavas, when they retired to these Himalayas and perished in the eternal snows, are sung in the Mahabharat as well as in the local folk-lore. These traditions have given rise to a large number of local songs and legends which are sung on occasions of religious festivities to the accompaniment of drums and other musical instruments. The people become inspired and full of religious frenzy and are possessed by gods and goddesses, and begin to dance and perform miraculous feats of strength,—such as uprooting big trees, jumping into burning fire, etc.

The district of Garhwal is hemmed in on all sides by other countries and peoples. On the north is the mysterious land of Tibet, the land of magic and black art,—*Jadugiri Bhot* as it is called in the folk-lore of Garhwal; to the east is Kumaon, comprising the present districts of Almora, Nainital and Nepal; to the West is the district of Dehradun or Mal as it is called in the folk-lore; while to the south is Rohilkhand, the home of the much dreaded Rohillas. The medieval history of Garhwal is full of continual wars with these neighbouring countries. The district was cut up into small principalities governed by petty chieftains of different clans and tribes. These chieftains also carried on perpetual warfare with one another on the slightest pretexts. These internal and external wars have been celebrated in legend and song of high poetic merit.

Then again, in primitive times, men all over the world

believed in gods, goddesses, fairies and ghosts. All natural phenomena were ascribed to the agency of supernatural powers, their peculiar forms being influenced by the special qualities of their environment. In Garhwal, hill and dale and forest were believed to be peopled by fairies, gods and demons who interfered with the affairs of men, for good or bad. Hence the people performed various kinds of worship to propitiate them, and the hymns sung in their honour during such worship from an important part of the folk-lore of Garhwal. A large number of the legends and songs of the neighbouring countries—especially Kumaon—have also been introduced into the local folk-lore.

The Garhwal folk-lore may thus be classified under the following main heads :—

1. Legends of the Puranic gods and demons, and their battles. The most popular and important legends under this head being those of the Pandavas, being recited in connection with the Pandav dance, as it is locally called; and the legends describing the early life of Krishna, the cowherd-god of Gokul.

2. Legends of the ancient kings and heroes of Garhwal and its neighbouring countries and their wars. These legends are locally called *Bharwalis*.

3. Legends and songs about fairies, ghosts and village godlings.

4. Ballads and love songs.

I shall now try to describe, briefly, the main features of the folk-lore under each of these heads.

The Puranic legends.—These appear to have been taken mainly from the *Mahabharat* and the *Bhagavat*. The *Mahabharat* legends describe the adventures of the Pandavas during their journey in the Himalayas, as well as other stories comprised in the Epic, in a most graphic manner. In every village these dances are held on festive occasions, specially during the cold weather, when the village folk—men and women—collect round a bonfire and dance and sing in choruses of remarkable pathos and beauty. It fills one with wonder to see

the people dance from sun-set to sun-rise for nine or more days performing wonderful feats, such as eating mud, grass, nettles and live charcoal; uprooting trees and jumping into fire.

The legends associated with the early life of Krishna also farm a large part of the folk-lore of Garhwal. They are locally called the songs of the *Nágs*. I shall give the substance of one ballad by way of illustration. It begins with the genealogy of the gods and demons, and goes on to the genealogy of the kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties, and of the Nag dynasty. Krishna is called the king of the *Nágs*, or *Nágrája*. The geneology of the *Nág* dynasty therein given is interesting. Ámi Nág was the first King. After him came Phani Nag. Then Sisa Nag, then Biser Nag, then Tataki Nag, then Basuki Nag, father of Krishna. Then comes a quaint but nevertheless suggestive version of the birth of Devaki, mother of Krishna. King Auk had four queens: Diti, Aditi, Kadru and Binata. The gods were born from Diti and the demons from Aditi. The male issue from Kadru were the vultures while those from Binata were the snakes. This account is somewhat different from that given in the Puranas.

Kans was the King of the demons. He oppressed both gods and men. He levied illegal taxes of various kinds, such as on unmarried girls and on the grass that grew in the forest. He forced the gods to accept his suzerainty. Then the gods, after a consultation with Brahmá, cut open their thighs and filled an earthen jar with their blood. Brahma said: "From this blood will issue forth a being who will destroy Kans and the other demons." They then sent the jar to Kans by way of homage. Kans was much pleased and ordered the jar to be handed over to his old mother, Pawan Rekha, aged eighty years. Pawan Rekha opened the vessel and looked into it, and inhaled the vapour arising from it. This caused her to become pregnant. Thereupon, in alarm, she called her seven sons and told them about it, adding that it forboded evil to the family. In due course Pawan Rekha was delivered of girl whom the astrologers named *Deoki*, and predicted that her eighth child would destroy Kans and the other demons. This story is not found in the *Bhagavat*.

The rest of Krishna folk-lore has been taken from the Bhagavat with local touches here and there. His amorous dances with Radhika and other *Gopinis* (milk-maids) are sung in a most enchanting manner.

I now come to the next sub-division of the Garhwal folk-lore which comprises the legends of the battles and adventures of the ancient kings and heroes of Kumaun. This branch of the hill folk-lore contains thrilling stories of the valour and supernatural feats of strength of the ancient heroes who are, of course, mostly historical personages, with a halo of divinity round them. They also furnish a great deal of historical information. It is to be regretted that owing to these *Bharwalis* not having been committed to writing, much absurd and obscene matter has gathered round them. But, even such as they are, they are full of poetic beauty and feeling. These stories are so long that the full narration of a single one takes a whole day. Still I shall try to give a summary of one characteristic legend. It refers to the conquest of Tibet or Bhot, by two ancient Garhwali heroes named Sidwa and Bidwa.

Once upon a time there ruled a king in Bhutan (Tibet) by name Sonpal. He has seven daughters, the eldest of whom is named Jotra Mala. She is as beautiful as the full moon. She practises austerites and prays to the goddesses Ganges for twelve years in order to gain her ideal husband. When the Goddess at length appears to offer a boon, she asks for a bridegroom as beautiful as herself. The Goddess grants her prayer, saying that she shall be married to Krishna, the Lord of Dwarka. Thereupon Jotramala appears to Krishna in a dream. On awaking, *Krishna* becomes restless, and sends a letter through the black bees to his younger brother Suraj Kunwar who ruled in Bimlikote. The black bees swarm up into the sky in so thick a cloud that even the sun is hidden by their shadow. They reach Bimlikote and fill the whole palace of Surja Kunwar. They sting his queens. Eventually the queens awaken the Raja, and the bees swarming on his shoulders drop the letter into the king's lap. On reading it, Surja prepares to start for Dwarka,

but his queen Bhompa Gujri dissuades him from going, saying that whoever goes to Dwarka never returns. To this, however, Surja pays no heed. Meanwhile bad omens are noticed. The water mixed with ashes, which was put in a basket for washing Surja's clothes, does not trickle through. The hair of Surja's head begins to droop. His pet goat Tila begins to sneeze.

Surja is not dissuaded even by these portents and leaves for Dwarka. On the way he comes to the peak called *Kalecha* where dwell seven witches. They seat him on their bed, where he falls asleep. The witches measure his body with a three-stringed thread and turn him into a ram with a spotted head and white tail. This, it appears, is what they used to do to every one who ventured to go to Dwarka. His queen Bhompa who is a magician herself, sees Surja in a dream, in that plight. She puts on male dress, takes up a flute, rides her pony and reaches the home of these witches. She converts her horse into a bee, and sitting on a rhododendron tree begins to play on her flute. The witches hover round the tree, charmed by her music, and invite her into their house, there entertaining her with a sumptuous feast. Bhompa, after eating the feast, enmeshes the witches in a net through her superior magical powers. She then threatens to kill them unless they restore her husband. They point to the place where Surja is tied up in the form of a ram. Bhompa thereupon restores him to human shape, and does the same for all the other Rajas who met with a similar fate. Surja still insists upon going to Dwarka, and all remonstrances having failed, Bhompa lets him go. On reaching Dwarka, Surja is received with due honor by Krishna, who tells him about his seeing Jotra Mala in a dream and his love for her. He further asks him to go over to Tibet and fetch her at any cost. Surja agrees to go, but asks Krishna to send Sidwa Ramola with him.

Sidwa and *Bidwa* were hill chieftains of Ramoligarh and great heroes. Their spinning top weighed nine seers; the blanket worn by each weighed nine maunds; and their loin cloths measured a hundred cubits in length. They had a tiger-shaped drum hanging over their shoulders and a seven-mouthed conch, weighing nine maunds. They had twelve score of flocks, sixteen score of herds, and a nine-stringed iron whip. On receipt of

Krishna's letter, similarly conveyed by the bees, Sidwa gets ready to start. He dons his helmet and arms. He equips himself with magical appliances and conjures up spirits. He looks like a fearful serpent, or a roaring lion rushing down a hill slope. He blows his seven-mouthed conch, which calls forth all the fairies and nymphs from the high hill of *Khaint* (a peak near Tehri) who come and dance round him, ready to obey his behests. Then Sidwa rides forth on a fine horse, which flies up into the sky, and touches the disk of the sun. On the way he meets with adventures amongst witches, demons, etc., all of whom he overcomes and reaches Dwarka safely.

Then comes their departure for Tibet, whereat Surja's mother and all the people of Dwarka lament, for no traveller has ever returned from Bhot. Surja at last quiets his mother, telling her to keep some milk in a dish, a naked sword placed erect, and a garland of flowers, as mementos. He says if the milk turns into blood, the sword topples over, and the garland withers, then only should she know that Surja is dead. Their first halt is at *Sandandhar,* the last ridge of mountains from which their country could be seen; their next at the ridge called *Reonidhar.* At mid-night the witches who dwell there appear, as also the nymphs from the *Khaint* peak. They carry away Surja to *Khaint,* leaving Sidwa alone. Sidwa beats his drum which calls back all these creatures who had made away with Surja. As they come down and dance round him, Sidwa throws a net over them, and forces them to bring Surja back from their mountain abode. But strangely enough they had meanwhile taken away half his beauty.

After meeting with various other adventures they reach the country where men walk on only one leg. They fight and kill the king of that country and proceed further. They then reach a ridge called *Pipaldhar.* Here they again play on their drum and flute, and making the nymphs of Khaint reappear, compel them to surrender the portion of Surja's beauty which they had stolen. In return, these nymphs, extort a promise from Surja to marry them on his way back from *Bhot.* At last, they reach the river which lies on the borders of Tibet, at the *Bishwat*

Shankrant (in April), which was the occassion of a great bathing festival in Tibet.

Now Sidwa plays a trick on Surja. He says : "Surja I have an attack of fever. To-morrow is the *Bishwat Shankrant* when Jotra Mala will come to bathe in the river. I am going off to sleep. You look after the business of Jotra Mala." He thereupon smokes a big dose of hemp and falls into a long sleep.

Jotra Mala comes in a palanquin early next morning. When Surja approaches her palanquin, she becomes enamoured of his beauty. She takes him home with her and asks her father's permission to marry him. He is brought into the royal palace and begins to live with Jotra Mala. The other sisters of Jotra Mala become jealous and plot to kill Surja. One day Jotra Mala goes to the spring to wash Surja's clothes, after warning Surja not to go out. During her absence her sisters invite him to dinner and poison him, throwing his body into a pit of salt. Immediately the milk in the dish at Dwarka begins to turn into blood, the sword falls down and the flowers in the garland wither.

This makes Krishna think that Surja had been killed. He at once sends a message to Bidwa, younger brother of Sidwa and requests him to proceed to Bhot. Bidwa, also a great magician with all the spirits at his beck and call, disguises himself as a monk and making double marches, in spite of all the obstacles on the way, reaches Sonpal's capital. He first goes where Sidwa lies asleep, awakens him and tells him about the death of Surja. On hearing this Sidwa shakes with genuine Rajput rage. The fastenings of his garments snap, and the stones of the hills are ground to dust beneath his stamping feet. Both the brothers go to the king's palace, lay hold of his daughters, and threaten to kill them all unless they deliver up the body of Surja. They point out the pit of salt where Surja's body lies buried. Sidwa and Bidwa take out Surja's body and by means of their magical powers, restore it to life. Then they kill the six daughters of Sonpal who had murdered Surja, as also Sonpal himself, who appears to have instigated them. They place his son Ajai Pal on the *gadi* and return to Dwarka with Jotra Mala.

This story, stripped of its poetic embellishments, refers to the invasion of Tibet by an ancient Raja of Garhwal. The Raja had fallen in love with Jotar Mala, daughter of King Sonpal of Tibet, and sent an army under the command of his younger brother Surja Kumar with Sidwa and Bidwa as his generals. Prince Surja was treacheously murdered by the other daughters of Sonpal at his instance. Sidwa and Bidwa killed Sonpal and these daughters, and putting Sonpal's son, Ajai Pal, on the throne of Tibet, returned with Jotar Mala to Garhwal. The substitution of Krishna for the Raja of Garhwal is explained by the fact that in ancient times the Raja of Garhwal was looked upon as the incarnation of Vishnu or Badri Narain himself.

Several other similar stories describe the wars between the two neighbouring districts of Garhwal and Kumaun. Some refer to the internecine quarrels between the various petty chieftains who ruled in Garhwal. The heroes are ever ready to lay down their lives for their ladies. The wives in their turn are no less heroic, either dying in the funeral pyre as *Satis,* or bringing up sons fired with the idea of taking revenge on their enemies. The Garhwali mothers of those days, like their Spartan prototypes, exhorted their sons either to return with the shield or on the shield. In one characteristic legend there is a description of a heroic mother who when exhorting her young son to go and fight the slayer of his father, presses her breast from which a stream of milk is ejected with such force that it makes a hole in a thick iron plate, impressing thereby on her son that he who has drunk of such heroic milk needs must be a great hero himself. Thus convinced of his own strength, he rushes forth roaring like a lion, and destroys the hordes of the enemy with his club.

I will now pass on to the third branch of Kumaon folk-lore, dealing with songs and stories of fairies, ghosts, and village godlings in which the Garhwali villager has a deep rooted faith. He believes them to be the causes of his diseases and troubles, and will incur great expense to propitiate them. Even the loss of a cow or a sheep is ascribed to the wrath of his family god or

goddess, and immediate steps are taken for their propitiation. Although faith in these supernatural creatures is dying out under modern influences, still it is a main part of the religion of the common people of the hills. It is indeed a pathetic sight to see a poor *dom* selling his all, and then begging and borrowing, in order to perform the Puja of his family god Nirankar. The fairies are locally called *Achris*. They are not like the malignant spirits of other countries. They are good hearted, amorous beings, fond of young folk, and usually possess young girls. There are beautiful stories about their carrying away to their mountain abodes young warriors, on the lines of the story of Surja Kunwar. One Jitu Bagdwal was so carried away by these nymphs and returned to his home after they has extorted a promise from him to surrender himself after a fixed period.

The persons possessed by these *Achris* dance to the accompaniment of a drum, and a big puja is held at the end. The *Achris* are the spirits of young and unmarried girls of respectable families whose funeral rites were not performed. They are also the daughters of Ravan the king of Ceylon. According to the local legend, Ravan offered his daughters to Siva, the presiding diety of the mountains, who became his *chelies* or disciples. Hence some dwelt on the Piri peak and were called *Bhararis;* others settled down on the Khaint peak and were known as *Achris*. These Achris, according to the story, went to a flower garden and began to pluck flowers and dance. There they met Krishna and became his *Gopinis* and still dance the eternal dance with Him.

The *Bhuts* are the spirits of young men whose funeral rites have been omitted. They are malignant beings who cause sickness and loss, and are very difficult to propitiate. They possess both young males and females. Those possessed by them dance to the accompaniment of a drum and have to perform an elaborate *puja*. Another class of *Bhuts* is known as *Ran Bhut*. They are the spirits of soldiers killed in battle by foul play. They are very revengeful and oppress the families of their enemy.

The village Godlings are either the ghosts of the ancient heroes such as Gorail, Sidwa and Bidwa, or are family gods and goddesses. Their number is legion, but the principal ones are,

Ghandial, Binsar, Nagraja, Narsingh, Khetrapal Kali, Nanda-devi, Nirankar, Goril, Sidwa, Bidwa, Jitu Bagdwal and Bhairab. Great festivals, called Jat or Jatra, are periodically held in honour of these godlings. The dancing and singing goes on for several days, and at the conclusion a large number of goats are killed and feasts given. Each of these godlings has a legend or song about him. I cannot here do more than mention a few typical stories.

The most important of the village godlings is Nirankar. He is chiefly worshipped by the *doms* or lower classes, but also by the higher caste Hindus in the Southern parts of Garhwal. He is the most dreadful of all the godlings and the failure to fulfil a viw to do his *puja,* or any irregularity in the ritual, is sure to be visited with condign punishment, in the shape of some calamity to the family. I shall briefly give the substance of a few songs sung with much devotion in honour of this god :

The first song describes the genesis of the world thus :

In the beginning there was neither earth, nor sky, nor water. Nirankar, the *Guru,* alone existed. The *Guru* rubbed his right side and from the sweat thereof a female vulture was born. The *Guru* rubbed his left side from the sweat thereof a male vulture was produced. Thus the female was placed over the male. The name of the female vulture was *Soni Garuri* and of the male *Brahma Garur.* The *Guru* regretted that, while he had wished to create human beings who would serve him, vultures should have been produced instead. The male vulture flew to the East and then to the North. He then came to marry Soni Garuri. But Soni Garuri objected, saying that as they had been created by the same *Guru* they were brother and sister, and could not marry. This she follows with taunting remarks about his ugly shape. Brahma Garur begins to weep. Soni Garur repents and picks up the tear drops which fall from his eyes. The tears penetrate her womb and she becomes pregnant. Thereupon she flies to the abode of Brahma Garur and begs him to build a nest for her to lay her eggs in. Garur now retorts with taunts as to her chastity and ends with : "You are very ugly, I cannot accept you as my wife." Soni in her

turn beginns to weep. Brahma Garur is moved to pity, and says : "There is neither earth nor water. Where can I build a nest for you? Come and lay your eggs on my wings." Soni replies, "You are the vehicle of *Vishnu* and would be polluted by my laying on your body." The egg thereupon drops down and is divided into two. The lower half becomes the earth and the upper half the sky. The fluid inside the egg become the sea, and the fleshy part the earth. Thus did Nirankar create the world.

Then comes an interesting story about the invention of ploughing :

After the Guru had created the earth, and all the beings that dwelt on it, man approached him and said, "How shall I live on this earth?" The Guru first called the lion and asked him to plough the earth. But he replied that as he was the king of the forest it would be derogatory for him to plough. Then the Guru called upon the other animals, one by one, who all declined to plough. At last the bullock was asked and he agreed. The Guru was much pleased with him and blessed him thus : "Thou shalt be worshipped and feasted on the twelve days of the *Dewali* festival. Silver caps shall be put on thy horns of the *Dewali* festival. Silver caps will be put on they horns and none shall do without thee." Then the Guru called Melu the ploughman, and asked : "Of what wilt thou make the plough?" Melu named all the metals from gold to iron. But Nirankar said : "The poor cannot afford to make their ploughs of precious metals. Make the plough of wood and the ploughshare of iron." Then Melu went to the blacksmith and asked him to make a plough of wood for him and offered to pay him nine *khars* (one *khar* is equal to 16 maunds) of paddy as wages. But the Guru said : "The poor will not be able to pay as much as that. Let the wages for making a plough be one winnowing basketful only, for all alike." Then the Guru called the bullock and put silver caps on his horns. He also created butter to rub his neck with, so that the yoke should not hurt it. He then ordered the pig to rub the butter on the bullock's neck with his snout. The pig ate part of the butter himself and rubbed only a little on the bullock's neck. Hence

the neck of the bullock has remained soft and is hurt by the yoke. The Guru cursed the pig and foretold that, in the Kali age, he would meet with a cruel death by being pierced with a sharp stick (this refers to the way in which a pig is killed).

Here is another curious story :

Kabir, the weaver, had dedicated one basket of grain and two cocoanuts to Nirankar. Nirankar went to Kabir's house in the garb of a beggar to receive these offerings, while Kabir was away. He asked for alms from Kabir's wife. She said that the only food left in the house was in the basket which had been dedicated to Nirankar. The beggar told her to give him something out of this. Kabir's wife went on taking out the grain from the big basket to fill the beggar's bowl, but could not fill it. She emptied the whole basket and still the bowl was not full. She then took out the two cocoanuts also and offered them to the beggar. The Sadhu told her to close her eyes, which she did. On reopening her eyes she found, to her great astonishment, all her rooms overflowing with grain, and two sons playing by her side in place of one. But the Sadhu had disappeared. He was a cripple and had taken the two cocoanuts under his armpits. While running back from Kabir's house, the cocoanuts dropped in an unclean place and were changed into male and female pigs. This story is evidently intended to explain why the *Doms* in the hills sacrifice pigs to Nirankar instead of goats.

There are many other interesting legends connected with the God Nirankar, which I omit for want of space. I will content myself with giving the substance of a ballad relating to *Goril,* another godling of the hills.

Once upon a time there was an old Raja by name Jhalurai. He had seven queens but no male issue. While hunting in the jungle, he felt thirsty and sent his men in search of water. They went to the abode of the goddess Kalindra to take water from the spring. But she did not allow them to do so. They reported the matter to their Raja, who invaded Kalindra's territory and married her. When she was about to give birth to a child the other queens grew jealous and plotted against her. They threw the child into the river in a silver casket soon after

its birth. This child's name was *Goril*. He was a supernatural being and was born through the right eye of Kalindra. The baby Goril called out to Jhalurai from the river and the latter went and picked him up. He killed all the six queens who had thrown the child into the river. This Goril succeeded Jhalurai on the throne and was famous for his justice. There was a dove who had her nest on a tree within Goril's territory, in which she had just hatched her young. A neighbouring Raja happened to pass with his retinue, and took out and killed the nestlings. When the dove returned with food she did not find them in the nest. She lamented bitterly and going to Goril sat over his throne and wept. When her tears fall on his head he looked up and saw the dove, and heard the story of her bereavement. Goril was filled with righteous indignation and took a vow not to rest until he had made her oppressor shed tears of blood. He raided the kingdom of that Raja, killed him and his people and destroyed his territory.

There are similar stories connected with every other village godling.

The fourth sub-division of the Garhwal folk-lore comprise the love songs. Although the greater part is full of indecent matter usually dealing with some love intrigue between young men and women, still one cannot fail to appreciate much of the poetry which is found in them. The imagery and natural descriptions are remarkable and compare favourably with the pastoral poetry of other countries. As an illustration I give the substance of the song called *Pheonli Rauteli* :

Once upon a time there lived one Nagu Saunial in Ujjain who had a daughter by name Pheunli Rauteli. She was of surpassing beauty, her back as beautiful as the full moon, her front as the sun. Her heel was as round as an egg, her shins like the mallet of a washerman, her thighs full as a plantain tree, her shoulders resembled a pair of doves; her waist was as well-shaped as the mud house of Kumali (a kind of green wasp), her lips were the two halves of a pomegranate; her teeth jessamine flowers. She sits on the eastern window of her house

and puts on fine clothes and jewellery. She dresses herself and puts the vermillion mark on her forehead. She goes to a pool to fetch water, and stoops to fill her pitcher from it, but finding that the frogs have polluted the water goes to another, and begins to fill her pitcher. To her surprise she sees the reflection of her lover, Bhupati Rautela, in the water below. He is seated above the spring. He throws a garland of flowers round her neck. She looks up. The lovers meet. When she returns home, her father chides her for being so late. He also asks her as to who had given her the garland. She makes up all sorts of excuses and explanations which do not satisfy him. At last she discloses the name of her lover and prays her father to marry her to him, to which the father consents. The song is full of poetic fire and imagery which it is difficult to reproduce. There are many other ballads of similar beauty.

Besides the classes of folk-lore above-mentioned there are a large number of Garhwali proverbs and sayings of much practical wisdom, riddles and jokes of remarkable humour, which if collected would throw much light on the social institutions and history of the people.

It is a surprise to me that there is no provision in the National University of the Hindus,—The Benares Hindu University—for the study of this branch of knowledge. I hope and trust that a chair may soon be founded for the teaching of Indian Ethnology and arrangements may be made for carrying on research work in that line.

APRIL

Breezy April, vagrant April,
    Rock me in your swing of music.
Thrill my branches with enchantment
    At your touch of sweet surprises.
In my life-dream by the wayside
    You come startling me from slumber ;
Wilful in your mood fantastic—
    Courting, teasing, and inconstant.

Breezy April, vagrant April,—
    Living with my lonesome shadows,
I know all your fitful fancies,
    Leafy language, flitting footsteps,—
All my boughs break into blossom
    At your passing breath and whisper ;
All my leaves break into tumult
    Of surrender at your kisses.

Rabindranath

THE ITALIAN EPICS

By Prof. Giuseppe Tucci.

II

It is only natural that, in the state of Italian society which I have described in the introduction, our epic poems could neither be inspired by strong natural feeling, nor animated by religious motives, nor enlivened by the pride of a people conscious of its present greatness and confident about its future. It was a sheer literary attitude through which the poets sought the realization of their ideals and of their artistic dreams. They derived their inspiration, of course, from the popular poems or novels, and clothed these rough and simple narratives in an artistic dignity; but it is worth remembering that, although accepting almost in their totality the plots and episodes of the strange and silly tales that were circulating among the common folk, this learned and sceptic pagan society, which no longer believed in miracles, but in facts,—this world of Machiavelli and Galilei,—laughed at and scorned the credulity of the lower classes.

The poetry which issued from such a society could perhaps have been the epic of a dead world : it was but the ironic expression of a conception of life which never took hold of Italy, and was already banished to the realm of dream and fancy. The consequence was that, instead of a revival and glorification of the old chivalry, these poems proved to be a reflex of the new humanistic society, permeated with its wit and scepticism, and a living representation of the wonderful awakening of consciousness and thought which characterised the culture of our Renaissance.

Luigi Pulci (XV century) is nearest to the popular soul, not because he shared the credulity of the people, but because the principal aim of his work was the same as that which moved the bulk of the authors of the numberless novels and poems circulating among the people,—that is to say, to amuse and to be amused. Any real artistic preoccupation is absent. Learned, but not so imbued with humanistic culture as many of his con-

temporaries were, he follows closely the models that the popular literature offered to him; and although he tries to blend in a harmonious unity the various elements he found scattered in the most different sources, adapting them to the organic plan of his poem, he is lacking in that genius which only can create an artistic masterpiece. In his *Morgante Maggiore* which treats of the heroes of Charlemain's cycle, the shade only remains: all figures assume a popular and often vulgar colour, every epic situation degenerates into a common event. We have in the *Morgante Maggiore* the echo of the noisy laugh of the people, rather than the smile of the man of letters. It is not the polished irony of a cultivated mind, but the coarse scoffing of an incredulous and witty multitude. Instead of Tancredi or Riccardo, or Orlando who gives the name to the poem, we have Morgante,—Morgante who is but a servant of Orlando, and at the same time the voice and the symbol of the people, in a fantastic world in which everything and everybody is unsubstantial, unsteady, unprecise, as in a dream. There is nothing of the tragic or heroic: the battles and the feats of the heroes, the death itself of Orlando, cannot inspire the poet to higher tunes: he is too sceptic and too rationalistic to take seriously what he is narrating.

In Matteo Maria Boiardo we find quite another man. He was a humanist deeply imbued with classic culture. He had not the ironical and scornful spirit of the Tuscan writer; but, full of admiration for Greek poetry, he believed that it was possible for him to give to Italy a Homeric poem: that is to say, he did not realize that the unity of feeling, hopes, culture, which inspired and animated the Greek epics was quite lacking in our people. He is too much in earnest to sing of a society which could only be portrayed true to life by a powerful imagination and a sparkling phantasy, but he has undoubtedly the merit of having prepared the advent of Ariosto. In fact, up to his time, the two cycles of which we have spoken before had a separate and quite distinct life. The one sang the feats of the Paladins, and the other told love's stories. Boiardo blended the two. The background of his poem is still the war between the Christians and the Unbelievers, and the heroic deeds of the champions of

the faith. But the interest of the poet is no longer in the battles or in the destiny of Paris beseiged by the Saracen army : what he creates and represents is a fantastic world in which events and persons are unstable and changing as though evoked by some magic power. And this magic is that of love symbolised by Angelica, a women of divine beauty who, at the suggestion of the devil, was sent by the father into the Christian field in order to bewilder the minds of the Christian warriors. She possesses the key to the heart of the Paladins : she is the sole spring of this weaving world of the *Orlando Innamorato.* But Boiardo did not realize and emphasize the contrast between this world of sheer imagination and the reality of the new society; moreover he was not a genuinely gifted artist. His work therefore could not become a heroic poem, nor had it the fine irony of the *Orlando Furioso,* the masterpiece of Ariosto.

Boiardo could not complete his poem : which ends with the seige of Paris by the Saracens. From here Ariosto begins. True humanist as he was, he tried to give new life to the classic comedy and to sing his feelings of love according to the Horatian model, in Latin verses : and son of his time, he was indifferent to the fate of his fatherland, which however was not quite the case with Boiardo. Ariosto's world, his only world, is that of Art. Pursuing the life of a courtesan, he lamented his bad luck that did not grant him the leisure and quiet to live only for his studies and for his art, far from the noise of the world, or the preoccupation of public duties and, as soon as circumstances allowed him to take his longed for rest, he dedicated all his spiritual strength to his poems, that is to say to the realization of his artistic ideal and fancies. The *Orlando Furioso* is as perfect in content as in form,—a world of mere phantasy of course, but now realized through the highest expression of art. Only we Italians can feel all the charm of the sweet, if sometimes melancholy music of his verses, that embody the serene and pagan voluptuousness with which he responds to the harmonies of nature.

It is difficult to give in brief the content of the poem owing to the many and various episodes which the inexhaustible phantasy of Ariosto incorporates into the unity of his poem.

It begins with the defeat of the Saracens; but the greatest warriors, instead of revenging this blot on all Christianity, are only pursuing their personal aims. Brandimarte, heroic amazon, who hopelessly loves Orlando, wanders after the object of her dreams, while the Paladin, who contemns her feeling, is in turn trying to conquer the heart of Angelica. Rinaldo is looking for his Boiardo. The king of the Saracens, Agramante, taking advantage of this opportunity, again attacks Paris, and tries to burn it. He would have succeeded in this object had not God, in order to prevent the ruin of the fortress of Christianity, sent down a miraculous shower and quenched the fire. After a long wandering Rinaldo comes back and reanimates the Christians, while some of the Saracen champions are still away in pursuit of their personal revenges or love affairs, as in the case with Sacripante who has fallen in love with Angelica. The consequence is that Agramante, deserted by his best warriors, is in great danger.

Meanwhile Orlando hears that Angelica has married a humble soldier of the pagan army. This news, which means the end of his dream of love, drives him mad. Insane and furious he wanders through Africa and Spain, brutishly wasting countries and frightening people. Christianity cannot tolerate that its best champion should behave in this manner and it becomes necessary to restore him to his wits. Therefore a knight, Astolf, comes to the rescue and undertakes the difficult task of going up to the moon where, in a large valley, the wits of all who have become insane in this world are deposited. Ascending through heaven with his winged horse, Pegasus, Astolf reaches the moon and, having found the bottle in which Orlando's wisdom is enclosed, comes back with it to earth. With great difficulty they succeeded in catching Orlando, and as soon as he smells the contents of the bottle brought by Astolf, he recovers his wits.

All this time they are fighting near Paris. In order to avoid the consummation of a great massacre, it is agreed, by common consent, that Rinaldo for the Christians and Ruggieri for the Saracens, shall decide the issue of the war by a duel. But while the two champions are fighting, Agramante violates

the agreement. A general battle follows which leads to the complete defeat of the pagan king; he escapes but his fleet is scattered by a storm and he arrives in his capital only to assist at its burning by the Christians.

True, this shifting background of the poem has a centre round which persons and events are attracted and which amidst the floating mass of the fanciful adventures, represents the only fixed point: this centre is Paris from which everybody starts and to which everybody returns. But, as can be realised by this summary, it is no epic of the actual world; but only the world of chivalry of our renaissance,—that is to say, a parody of chivalry; not the reality but the appearance; not the genuine strength of ancient warriors but the elegant aristocracy of our courts; not the bloody struggles of the middle ages but the harmless jousts and tournaments of public festivity.

Italy had forgotten her past and her military glory: her tyrants instead of armies employed the sword of their emissaries; to war they preferred diplomacy, that subtle and unscrupulous diplomacy of which Lorenzo was the artist and Machiavelli the scientist. Cunning instead of bravery, intelligence instead of power, specially appealed to the heart of this cultivated and sceptic pagan world. Iago, as Macaulay justly remarks, was certainly the type which the Italian of the Renaissance would have far preferred to the irresolute nobility of Othello. Ariosto himself tells us, at the very beginning of his poem, that he is singing "the women, the nights, the armies the loves which happened when the Saracens came to Europe;" but it is of course his own time which is really reflected in the *Orlando Furioso*: no longer an inward feeling of religion, but a luxuriant paganism, no miracles but the magic and wonderful play of forces, no more love but voluptuousness, no national pride but a mere desire to pursue an artistic ideal, not a reality spiritualized by the faith, or a deep conviction but a fanciful world above which is floating the ironical smile of the poet, pleased with the magical creation of his phantasy, but not for a moment seriously believing in its consistency.

Tasso has a quite different character. When new events seemed to change the consciousness of our people after the reck-

less and intoxicated freedom of the Renaissance, the Lutheran reform had aroused the Catholic counter-reform and the Roman church, afraid of losing its power, had proclaimed a holy war against the licentiousness of religious as well as social customs, and checking all research of free thought, had started a rigid intolerance of which the first victims were Giordiano Bruno, Bruno, Campanella, Vanini. The smiling and frank indifference of the preceding century is followed by a bigotted and false puritanism. What is necessary to respect according to the new conception, is no more the inward feeling but only the external appearance. Tasso lived in this period: in him, the exigencies of a man of letters imbued with classic thought and the scruples of the faith, the free impetuosity of the artist and the cautious restraint of the learned, are struggling and fighting without any possibility of ever being harmonised. By nature irresolute and biassed with a pessimistic vision of life, his internal struggles wear out his mind and at the first shock of reality he gets so exhausted that his reason breaks down. While with Ariosto his poem took birth from the thirst of his soul to accomplish the expression of his artistic ideals, with Tasso the canons of the critic preceded the free imagination of the artist.

Tasso wanted, ever since his youth, to restore to life the ancient poems and he begins by discussing which rules and laws must be observed in writing a heroic poem: that is to say, narrating a great feat which takes hold of the soul of a whole people, which is edifying, and inspired by true religion. After the first essay of the *Il Rinaldo,* where he tries to introduce in the poem the principle of Aristotelean unity, the thought occurs to him that nothing could offer a fitter subject and more serious inspiration to a poet than the glorious deeds of the Crusades. And to him nothing seemed more living and appealing to the soul than the revival by the Turks of the danger of the Saracene invasion. Out of this preoccupation of a learned man, rather than from an artistic impulse arose the *Gerusalemme Liberata.* The subject of the poem is the first crusade which he chose because his aim was also to create a work of moral edification. For the mere whimsical sequence of events which characterise the *Orlando Furioso,* he substituted a net work of cause and

effect determined by the free will of man. All happenings beyond human power are attributed to God and to his miracles. Instead of a multitude of Paladins and champions, each pursuing his own interests, we have a central figure in Jeoffroy the chief of the Christian army, who in the mind of Tasso, was destined to represent the ideal type of the Christian hero. But he is too perfect in his abstract superiority, so that he seems more of a saint than a warrior; the consequence is that he has not enough of life.

This preoccupation with the likely and the logical was prejudicial to Tasso's poetic power, and, in spite of his great care for order and organic completeness, we find that something essential is lacking in the poem. The interest of it,—of which he was also conscious,—lives more in the episodes than in the whole; the reason being that Tasso had not by nature the temperament for feeling and expressing an epic world. Moreover, the society in which he lived, in its political subjection, and in its lack of any serious spiritual feelings, could not give a real epic inspiration. In fact he was specially a lyric poet, and, rather than in singing Homeric feats, he was more a master in expressing the moving world of his soul, an idyllic and melancholy world which insinuates into the monotony of the *Gerusalemme Liberata,* the dreaming charm of the *Aminta.*

THE BAULS OF BENGAL

By Rames Basu.

People outside Bengal, who are interested in her literature, have heard of her Vaishnava poets. But, whether residing in other Indian provinces or living in foreign lands, they have known nothing of the wandering Baüls of Bengal, till a very recent date. It was perhaps for the first time that Rabindranath expounded their basic philosophy and translated some of their songs before a distinguished audience in France. This lecture on *A folk-religion of Bengal,* now finds place in his *Creative Unity*. It was as unexpected as it was fortunate that the world-renowned Bengali poet and philosopher should have interpreted the thoughts and messages of these unrecognised folk-poets who live outside the social pale of modern Bengal.

Even in Bengal the Baüls are not given much thought. They, in their turn, do not acknowledge the regularly constituted social institutions or the rigorously observed social injunctions. Their seats, called *ákhrás* or *ásthánas,* are not generally visited by the ordinary man, because these are located in out-of-the-way places and also because the inmates are not given to speaking out their mind to uninitiated outsiders. Neither are they in the habit of committing their doctrines to writing; they hand down their songs and traditions direct from preceptor to disciple in order that the esoteric mysteries they teach may not come within the reach of scoffers.

The story of this sect is a very interesting chapter of the religious history of Bengal. Mysticism, for which they stand and which is of the essence of their cult, has ever been an integral part of Indian life and literature, art and philosophy. Esoteric practices full of symbolical meaning, which occupy a predominant place with the Baüls, have taken root in the Indian mind from a very remote past. The main features of the Baül cult seem to have been derived from or in some way connected with those of the Vajrayána Buddhists, a branch of the Maháyána school, which had its stronghold in Bengal. Indeed

the musical literature of the latter may fairly be taken as the precursor of the songs of the former. Not only the spirit but the manner of expression is strikingly similar.

The *sandhyá-bháshá,* or twilight dialect of the Vajrayánists is closely analogous to what are called *rágátmika* (symbolic and *prahelika* (enigmatic) methods of diction employed by the Baüls. Those who are not conversant with their inner mysteries are at a loss to make anything out of the mass of apparently unmeaning words. In the Vajrayánist songs collected by Mahámahopádhyáya Haraprasád Sástri there occurs a word, *Bajula,* which I am inclined on phonetic grounds to take to be the origin of the Bengali word *Baül.* The commentary says that the word means a 'Vajradhara' or a *guru* of the Vajrayána school. Gradually this term must have been adopted by the later school of Baüls who were influenced by Vaishnavism, divested of its original significance. Still later it is used in the Chaitanya-charitámrita, and the Nathic chronicles, simply in the sense of a mystic and ascetic wanderer. No other derivation of the word, attempted by different scholars, is tenable in the light of these facts.

In the Vaishnavism of Bengal, pure Bhágavatism which was prevalent during the reign of the *Pala* kings was the first phase. The next phase of Krishnaism soon became popular, and the advent of Radha during the period of the *Senas* gave a new turn to the entire Vaishanava mythology and literature. During the early Muhammadan rule the theme of the amours of Radha and Krishna provoked poetical outbursts amongst the Sanskritist rhetoricians like Vidyápati as well as amongst the adherents of the *Básuli* cult which obviously is also an offshoot of Vajrayána. This latter class was represented by Chandidas. In the Chaitanya period the two forces combined. Rupa and Sanátan Goswamis, the most prominent of the former, worked hand in hand with the latter,—amongst whom the Vajrayánist tendency towards mystification was not yet entirely lost,—in the persons of Rámánanda Ray and Krishnadás Kaviraj. Thus the neo-Vaishnavism of Bengal absorbed the tendencies of Vajrayána, Sahajayána and the other Buddhist cults. It is to be remarked that the influence of the Sanskritists is apparent in the purely

Vaishnava songs, and that of the mystics in those of the Baüls who are variously known as Vairágis, Sahajiyás, Kartábhajás, etc.

This composite nature of Baülism is responsible for its dual significance in life and in literature. From the Buddhist Tantrics the Baüls have drawn their manner of symbolisation and some of the rites of their sect, and from the Vaishnavas they learnt to beautify and sweeten the spiritual life in communion with God the Lover. They have been gainers in each case, in their contact with Tantricism and Vaishnavism. For unlike the latter they put Man and God in the place of a mythical god and his symbolical mistress. They received their philosophy from the former, and their poetry from the romanticism of the Vaishnava period.

When the Baül cult was confronted by Islam it did not fight shy, as did the other cults of Hindu origin. It is to their credit that the Baüls could approach and absorb the Sufistic traits and tenets of Islam without losing their own speciality or injuring that of the other. This is only one of the numerous instances of the real synthetic capacity inherent in the Bengali race-mind. What the policy of the sword on the part of the rulers failed to compel, was gradually brought about by the truth and beauty of the people's soul. Thus a real Hindu-Muslim *rapprochement* was the net result of this movement. And the poetical literature of the Baüls, to which both Hindus and Muslims contributed, is truly *national* in the sense of being evolved from the midst of the people. Not only in theory, but in practice also, respect and reverence are offered where they are really due, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. The Hindu *Sáïns* have their Muslim disciples, and the Muslim *Murshids* have their Hindu following. In one of the sects of the Baüls when a devotee attains to the highest state of the *Saïn*, he wears a string of cow-bones as well as *tulasi*-beads. As inwardly so outwardly no difference is recognised.

In India every sect is based on some philosophical or metaphysical doctrine, and none is without its particular rites, and *sádhana* (method of realisation of truth). As regards the first, the Baüls do not go by the Brahmanical systems of philo-

sophy. Nor, like the other Hindu sects, have they any mythical or Puranic gods and goddesses. They accepted the symbolism of the loves of Radha and Krishna partly as a necessary means of preserving the very life of the sect in the days of the Hindu Revival, and partly because it helped to give a concrete literary shape to their mystic purposes.

On the side of *sadhana,* the system of the Baüls consists mainly of two interrelated aspects. First the *deha-tattwa* or the theory of the human body as a microcosm,—which is akin to the Tantric view. Secondly the theory of realisation by steering through the fleshly career of the composite human being to the haven of final bliss,—which reminds us of the theories of *deha* and *ánandas* as explained and practised by the Vajrayánists. The whole process may be said to be a spiritual fight against the senses which, if unchecked, are the most obstinate enemies of man. This fight is deemed to be a necessary step to the higher spiritual life. But on this first step stumble a great many of those who lack proper restraint, and the spirit of aloofness, in handling sense-affairs. This has often led to serious excesses both in theory and in practice. The morals of the weaker followers have given way to gross sensual tendencies instead of being helped to self-purification. Until this stage of stress and struggle is over, the Baül has strictly to adhere to the prescription laid down by his own particular preceptor.

The process of realisation does not stop with the first conquest, but when the realities of human life have been faced and conquered, the Baül is to enter a new life of Love in which true mysticism finds its own, and both Man and God take an active part. Human life is given a new value and dignity by the Baül. He is not at all a pessimist of the ordinary Indian type,—on the contrary life, to him, is worth living if only for the love of God. Amidst all the ills and sufferings of life, the Divine Lover, though sometimes seemingly indifferent or even merciless, is waiting for the Human Soul, without reunion with whom the Creator's scheme of creation is but incomplete. To the Baül the rhythm of creation requires that Man should realise in full the charm of human life,—the life in and through which Man enjoys God and reciprocally God enjoys Man. This may be

highly audacious, but its very daring has unlocked the heart of the Baüls and drawn therefrom songs of the joys of communion or the pangs of separation. In this stage the Baül is no longer struggling, but is a *Rasika* (enjoyer). His whole life becomes as a flute on which soft or keen notes are being played by unseen fingers. He is no longer chained down by outward observances and is as free as when musical notes melt into the air.

Turning to the literature of the Baüls we notice that corresponding to the two aspects of Baulism, there are two distinct types of literature, characterised respectively by esoteric symbolism and mysticism proper. These two do not always run parallel, but are often mixed, with a disastrous result, which is neither good philosophy nor elegant poetry.

As is the case with the Vajrayánists, the ideal life within our real one is what really matters to the Baüls. Reality in the ordinary sense is shadowy nothingness. And they have evolved an elaborate symbolical phraseology to give expression to the inner and esoteric modes and stages of spiritual realisation.

The special number of *pukurs* or ponds, and *manjaris* or attendants, the theory of *álekh* or unmanifested, the *háwá,* or awakening of the *kula kundalini,* the six *paithás* or steps, the six *chakras,* the successive processes of refining and crystalising the juice of sugarcane into sugar typifying the successive higher stages of realisation, the five *tattwas* or elements, the term *jiva* as used for outside people,—these are but a few of the mystic symbols used for concealing their esotericism from the uninitiated. Further, the crafts and events of ordinary social life also furnish them with other symbols. Thus the oilman, the boatman, the weaver, the milkman, the smith, the schoolmaster, the birth of a baby, the marriage ceremony, the play at dice or cards, the funeral rites, the battlefield are not to them toiling folks, or interesting facts of the outer world, but denote different characters or stages in the Divine Drama. But the delineation of the themes comprising these symbols does not claim any literary finish and soon bores those for whom they are not specially intended.

What Vajrayána or Tantricism could not aspire to, and what even Vaishnavism failed to keep up, was however achieved

by the Baüls whose mystic outpourings of the heart always stir the soul of Bengal. And here they claim a common place of honour with the Indian Rishis of the Upanishads and the Sufis of Persia. A particularity of the Baüls is, that when the ultimate Truth dawns upon them realise it not to be Beauty only but Love also. This Lover in God they call "the Man of the Heart." The special distinction of the Baüls lies in the fact that, while the Rishis and the Sufis were highly cultured people, they are usually neglected and unlettered rustics. This points to a spiritual democracy in which Man's birthright for realising the deepest mysteries is freely recognised. The beauty and spontaneity of the songs of the Baüls in which personal touches heighten the effect, place them high above many other schools of Bengali singers or chroniclers. From the world of puranic theology and symbolic philosophy these master-singers bring religion down to the region of poetry, tinged with a mysticism actually lived by them, just as Bhagiratha made the waters of the Ganges flow from the dark caves of the rugged cliffs down on the thirsty plains of Hindusthan in numberless rills and rivulets.

When the Baül is also a poet, his mode of expression becomes happy and ceases to be laboured. His Brindábans have no geographical existence, but are within the heart of Man. He compares human life with the Hindu ceremony of floating lamps on the river. His songs of diving into the darkness of existence reveal a new light on life. To the beloved *Man of the Heart* he pours out his song-offerings. His *holi* festival is not of the common type—it represents the coming of the Lover through the exuberant splendours of the spring. The fury of the summer storms, the eternal flowing of the rivers into the waters of the ocean, the playing on the flute, are only some of the themes to which justice is done in a way worthy of any great poet. When the Baül sings of the flowers which are the loves and beauties of this world and which are to be linked up into a garland for the Divine Lover by the string of man's own heart, he commands our respect as a true worshipper of Beauty and not a mere symbolist.

The Baüls are pre-eminently known as singers and com-

posers. No other branch of literature is as a rule cultivated by them. They have their own tunes and strains. They play on their stringed instrument of the most primitive type, while they sing out their thrilling *tremolos* which rise and fall like the waves on the paddy-fields and on the wide rivers of Bengal. The Baül tune proper and that of Bhátiyál have their distinctive place in the indigenous musical system of Bengal which differs fundamentally from classical Hindu music, or that of the other provinces of India.

The Baüls are no idol-worshippers. They discard the use of images even for those who are beginners on the path of realisation. They rely entirely on their *gurus* for guidance, and ordinarily revere them as divinities. As Ramakrishna Paramahamsa said of them, "they do not like inanimate idols, they want living man." As worshippers of the *karttá* or living man they are called *Karttábhajás*. But this does not exhaust the varieties of sub-sects in Baüldom. There are the *Auls, Kishori-bhajas,* and many others. When a Baül has reached the highest plane of perfection he is honoured with the title of *Sáïn.*

The place of woman in the sect of the Baüls is worth particular notice. They set a special value to the loves of man and woman because their idea is, that love for God can be attained only through the refinement of that attraction which is natural in all flesh. It is their study of sex-psychology which they turn to practice. When they were admitted into Vaishnavism, the Baüls did not agree to forsake their women attendants. Though the strictly ascetic Vaishnava leaders were against this mode of living, they connived at it in the case of the Vaishnavised Baüls who were left to manage their own affairs. In fact Baülism here combines traits of Tantricism and Vaishnavism. The idea is, that in order to be benefitted by the right use of the sex-instinct, man should live with women, but not be overcome by the calls of the senses. In their symbolic language : the black-bee shall sit on the cup of the lotus but not suck the honey therefrom. Women members of this sect are often known to have ascended a high stage of realisation. One was known to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. The short story of Rabindranath,

called *Bostami* is based on the life incidents of a woman of this sect. But the connection with woman in a religious sect is detrimental to its high purposes. And it has done irreparable mischief to the Baüls as a sect. The idea of *parakîyá,* or non-wife spiritual mate, so highly spoken of by the Vaishnava poet-rhetoricians, is conceived of by them as specially applying to the case of Radha and Krishna, while the Baüls follow it in actual life, and have abused it to the utter degradation of the sect. They have vitiated the high original purpose by succumbing to the hankerings of the flesh.

Though they have their *ákhrás* or *ásthánas* the Baüls are homeless wanderers. With the renunciation of social life they have forgone all considerations of blood, or birth, or wealth. Many of their rites and practices differ from those of the pure Vaishnavas. They now take up any female attendant, merely by interchanging their necklaces of beads. They do not burn their dead, but inter them. Sometimes they paint their sect-marks on various limbs with holy mud.

The migratory habit of the Baüls is kept up by the institution of *melas,* or fairs, which are held all over rural Bengal on various occasions and in the different seasons of the year. The Baüls flock to these fairs in huge numbers and sing their soul-stirring songs to the accompaniment of their one-stringed instrument. Such gatherings at Kenduli, in memory of the poet Jayadeva, at Ramkeli in Maldah, at Khardah, at Ghosepara, the centre of the *karttabhajas,* at Langalbandh in Dacca, and at many other places, are of the nature of self-organised institutions where people from the neighbourhood meet on certain specified days, for which no advertisement, expenditure or propaganda are at all required.

These people have taken to the profession of begging alms. Though now not properly understood, the social economy of Bengal provided a kind of division in social service,—the householders had to give alms, and the Baüls were required to administer to the spiritual needs of the former, not by learned discourses, but by means of catching songs. Thus the system of *tahal,* or rounds, originated and the Baüls go from village to village on their errand of music. The Baüls are reticent by

nature and do not mix with other people, but they are not indifferent in carrying out their share of social service.

The Baüls have preserved orally, or in writing, connected chronicles of their sect. Outwardly Vaishnavised, they asserted themselves and kept up their own line of *gurus* to stimulate their own persuation. The orthodox Vaishnava school of Bengal did not satisfy their aspirations, and these they have voiced in a mass of *sahajiyá* literature, ever since the 17th century. They trace their descent from the old mystics who lent their influence to the cause of Vaishnavism. They recognise nine chief apostles of the *sahajiya* cult called the nine *Rashikas,* or enjoyers. The poets Jayadeva and Chandidás, the mystic Rámánanda Ray, the philosophers Krishnadás Kaviraj, and Taranîraman, are claimed by them, and much honoured in their circles. Later schools have of course their own particular lines of *gurus*. It may not be out of place here to mention our conviction that the Krishna worship which was prevalent in Bengal from a long past and was followed by the orthodox school of Vaishnavism even before Jayadeva, was transformed and mystified by a school of pre-Chaitanya mystics who introduced the loves of Radha in a symbolical sense. Chaitanyadeva himself accepted this mysticism at the hands of Ramananda Ray. This mystification of pure Vaishnavism reminds us of the leavening of Islam by the Sufi mystics of Persia.

It was normally to be expected that during the enlightened 19th century the Baüls should have lost whatever influence they might have exercised on our people. The Christian missionaries were at work, winning over members of this sect to their own fold. Yet, surprising to say, they survived even in this age of new movements in life, religion, and literature. When the material power of the British nation introduced new machinery and modes of life the Baüls did not change their front. They rather found new materials to work on, and the railway, the water-works, the balloon, the post-office, the courts of judicature, the machinery of administration, the Howrah bridge and the English school all gave them fresh scope for symbolisation. Again, instead of vanishing into insignificance, the spirit of the Baüls seems to have invaded the atmosphere of

the cultured who were living in the towns. Some of the promoters of recent neo-Hinduism were very fond of Baül literature. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa freely communicated with them and often sang their songs. Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar also was fond of Baül songs which he often heard from a Muhammadan faqir.

Further, as we know, the main currents of thought and literature of the age flowed through the channels of journalism, heroic epics, lyrics of love and drama and fiction of the modern type. The psychological anomaly, which frankly baffles us, lies in the fact that successive batches of young Bengali writers, who followed neither the old popular styles of *yátrá, kavi, pánchéli,* etc., nor even the modern poets and novelists, were attracted by the songs of the Baüls, and went to the length of imitating them. The rustic tunes of the Baüls were retained; at first their crude and laboured symbolism was also kept up; but gradually a purer mysticism prevailed with these modern writers. In social status, culture and persuation these writers had nothing in common with the rustics whom they followed. To name only a few, these are,—Kalinarain Gupta, Ananda Chandra Mitra, Chandranath Das, Kangal Harinath, Fikir Chand, Krishnakanta Pathak, and Indranath Roy Choudhury. They even assumed pen-names resembling those of the Baüls. Both Brahmos and orthodox Hindus were among the number of these writers. Men like Rajnarain Bose, Dwijendranath Tagore and Aswini Kumar Dutt set a high value on these neo-Baül songs. Mr. A. P. Sen, the well-known composer is indebted to the Baüls for some very catching tunes.

We cannot conclude this article without touching on the influence of the Baüls on the later songs of Rabindranath. As he has himself written, he did not at first give much thought to these rustics, as they seemed to be but little different from the other folk-singers of Bengal. But once the beauties of the best mystic productions of the Baüls had caught his attention, he absorbed the essential spirit of their mysticism, and utilised this new vision in his own songs. He has also adopted and remodelled the tunes of the Baüls, thus adding to his renown as a great composer. The characters of a blind Baül in a play

of his and the Baül woman in the story already mentioned, are not mere accidents,—they are the outcome of the poet's observation of and sympathy with these people.

As I have tried to show in a Bengali article, the mystic literature of Rabindranath falls into three epochs. The first evolved with the development of the inner self of the poet himself, whereof the *Kheya* and *Sonar Tari* are the typical poems. The second was initiated by his contact with the western mystics, *e.g.*, Maeterlinck, in his plays *Raja, Phalguni,* and then more fully developed when the poet asserted himself in the Post Office and Red Oleanders. The third dawns with the poet's understanding of the Baüls. Here the modern master-singer met the older master-singers. But no trace of the old conventional symbolisation is any longer to be met with and the richer flute of the poet has taken the place of the one-stringed instrument of the Baüls. The old mystic has merged in the new mystic who has heard new voices and dived into profounder depths.

INDIA AND AFRICA.

By C. F. Andrews.

India stands out over against the East Coast of Africa across the Indian Ocean. One of the most fascinating problems which modern history presents is that of the future relationship of these two countries.

In the long forgotten past the land area itself stretched from one continent to another. Naturalists are able to trace many resemblances in plant and animal evolution, which point to a connected land surface. Possibly human life itself had appeared before this great land cause-way was actually sundered. Even when the sea swept forward and the continents were finally divided, the ancient link between India and Africa was never entirely broken by the intervening ocean. A migration from shore to shore has taken place, and from a very early date the Indian traders from the borders of Kathiawar and Kutch and Malabar, either by hugging the coast in their tiny ships, or else by boldly taking advantage of the monsoon winds at their different seasons, and sailing straight across, have brought their merchandise to Mombasa or Zanzibar or Sofala and have carried African products back to Cochin and Goa, to Porbunder and Surat.

In modern times, with ever-increasing pace, the steamers have continued to make the Eastern coast of Africa more and more accessible for Indian commerce. To show how short the distance has become, I was told by one of the ship's officers on board the S.S. Karoa, that if a high speed for passenger service were required, it would not be difficult to accomplish the journey from Bombay to Mombasa in six or seven days. The aeroplane and the airship, whose advent is now imminent, will lessen the distance still further.

The old, delightful memories of the traditional hospitality of the South African people have reached India on account of the sea voyage round the Cape. In those byegone days of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century, the journals of the East India Company Officers constantly relate, that the one

bright spot in a long and tedious journey was the hospitable welcome given to the passengers of every India-bound merchantman when they reached South Africa. A record of this is to be found in the biography of Raja Rammohan Roy. We are told that in the excitement of the news about new-won liberties in Europe he slipped on the gangway while visiting a French merchantman in order to pay his tribute of respect to liberty-loving France. The fall seriously injured his leg and impaired his walking powers, and he never recovered from its effects. But the record of this gesture towards Liberty on the part of this greatest humanitarian and world-thinker of the early Nineteenth Century was worth the sacrifice.

Thus, through recorded and unrecorded time, India and Africa have stretched out hands to meet each other across the sea. The fact that they stand face to face, with no intervening land between, cannot be without its meaning for the evolution of the human race. The relations between them must inevitably become closer and closer. Nothing can ultimately keep the two countries apart.

When we examine further the geographical position, it becomes apparent that India must always be, for Africa,—as Raja Ram Mohan Roy called it,—the "Gateway of the East." And by the word "East" in this phrase is meant that vast mass of the human race, which is by far the densest on the surface of the globe. For it needs to be very carefully noted that the centre of gravity in the earth's population *has always lain in Eastern and Southern Asia.* India and China, with their immensely ancient and permanently prolific populations, have always weighed down the human scale in their own direction. Even to-day, in spite of the rapid increase of population in America and Europe, the centre of gravity has still remained in South-Eastern Asia.

The trend of recent events has made this age-long disproportion more acute even than before. For, while Europe has been decimated by the slaughter of the Great War and by the still more terrible disease and famine which have followed in its train, South-Eastern Asia has remained comparatively immune. While the birth-rate has been increasing in the East,

there has been a terrible decline in the birth-rate of the West. All these factors have made the disproportion greater instead of less.

India itself is one of the most thickly-populated countries in the world, containing one-fifth of the earth's human inhabitants. It is also the threshold of the Far East. It occupies, in this way, a unique position. For it is on the direct highway of the greatest concourse of the human race.

It is easy to understand how the commercial life of Africa, as it leaves the leading strings of Europe, and feels its own direct and unhampared movement forward, will inevitably gravitate, along its Eastern coast, more and more away from Europe and towards this vast population of India and the Far East. For one ship that passes from Durban eastward to-day, there will be a hundred ships in less than fifty years' time. This is an anticipation of the future which is well within the borders of safe surmising.

When we study history on a broad scale, and over great intervals of time, the sustained intellectual power which lies deep in the heart of Indian civilisation must strike the attention of every impartial observer. With the one possible exception of China—and even that a doubtful exception—there is no country in the world which has kept the light of pure intellectual knowledge burning so long and with so bright a flame. Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Tyre—all these have passed into oblivion. In Central and Southern America, material civilisations have come and gone. Nothing remains of them to-day but heaps of stones and dust. Greece illuminated the world for one supreme and unforgettable moment. But how brief was that period of illumination! How rapidly it passed back into darkness! India, on the other hand, through almost numberless generations, has ever been intellectually renewed. Revival has always followed close upon decline. India, in her old age, seems to have attained the secret of intellectual youth.

Our own generation has witnessed one of these renewals. To-day the intellect of India is wide awake—perhaps more actively wakeful and with more expectant eyes than that of the West itself. This intellectual alertness of modern India has

gone far beyond the bounds of the limited circle of the English-educated classes. India is like the pool of immortality, of which her own poets have sung, throwing up men of genius, men of artistic and creative power, men of spiritual insight and intuition, from among the masses of the common people.

For, in India of modern times, there are not only to be counted authors and artists of world-wide intellectual reputation such as there whom we love and worship, but there are frequent examples of obscure men and women to be met in villages and country places, who have thought deeply upon the mysteries of life, in their own pure and simple way, outside the common rut of conventional thought, and have lived daringly and fearlessly in acordance with their own unsophisticated intellectual vision.

Therefore, if intellect rather than wealth is regarded as the ultimate criterion of human advance; if intellectual attainment combined with simplicity of life,—that "plain living" and "high thinking" about which Wordsworth wrote,—is a surer test of human progress than any increase in the mechanical and material standards of physical comfort, then the Renaissance of Modern India stands out in the history of our times as signal in its achievements.

In relation to Africa itself, one constant feature needs to be remembered. While there has been, from time immemorial, that living human contact between the two continents, which I have already intimated, this westward trend of India has not brought to Africa as yet any great or deep intellectual development. The history of Madagascar has not been fully explored. It may be found that Hindu influences did actually reach that island at a very early date, bringing culture with them. But such a theory must still be regarded as doubtful. The evidence is insufficient to form any firm historical basis.

In the times that history clearly records, the main religious influence which has come from India to the East African coast has been that of Islam. But this influence, unfortunately, has not hitherto been strongly developed on its intellectual and spiritual side. No art and music, no poetry and literature, such as made famous the cities of Delhi and Baghdad, have ever flourished in Zanzibar and Mombasa. No college or university

of any eminence, euch as those at Cairo and Bokhara, has ever been founded on the East African coast. Trade has been all in all.

There is even a darker picture which can never be forgotten. Slavery was for more than a thousand years the constant concomitant of trade. It is true that a certain veneer of civilisation did spread down the East Coast, and had its permanent centre at Zanzibar. But it did not reach the interior, which remained a jungle. Its humanising powers were always counteracted by the intolerable raiding and bartering of human beings as mere chattels.

The Indian merchants, who came over in great numbers to the East African coast, took indeed their full merchandise of slaves back to India for service in the courts of Indian monarchs; but there is no clear indication that these Indian merchants themselves at any time actively engaged in slave-raiding. That ultimate iniquity was done by others. It is also remarkable how small the slave merchandise was in its extent and how little it affected the bulk of the Indian population. There were no gangs of slaves, as labourers, driven under the terror of the lash to plantations. The few slaves that were transported to India were kept for domestic service.

Turning back once more to the intellectual development in India itself, we note that the Hindu-Buddhist movement, which introduced the greatest spiritual expansion known to Indian history, went southward and northward and eastward, but not westward across the sea. It has left no permanent mark on Africa at all; indeed it is doubtful if it ever reached the African coast.

The motives underlying this earliest enthusiasm of religious thought, which sprang from the personality of Gautama, the Buddha, were all of them universal motives : they were not racial or national. The expansion aimed at by the Buddha himself was also universal. The Word went forth from the Buddha's lips that the Law of Brotherhood and Love was to be preached to all creatures. Gautama included the sentient dumb animals, as well as human kind, in his message. He included also by his direct injunction every country of the habitable earth.

Yet, in spite of this, by some mischance of history, all the glorious self-sacrifice of those wonderful days,—when civilisation at last really awoke to be a blessing and not a curse upon the earth,—never appears to have passed across the Indian Ocean to Africa. It went rapidly down the whole length of India to the South and reached Ceylon and found there a permanent home. It went, with equal rapidity, northward and across the mountain passes of the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush. It made a second home for itself in Tibet. The Western kingdom of Bactria was also won over to the Faith. The western coast of India was reached as well as the South. But before it reached the African side of the world, the religion of the Buddha appears to have exhausted its powers.

It will be well, by way of contrast with this sudden contraction of Buddhism on this side, to follow out a little more in detail the expansion which took place in ither directions. During the first thousand years of the present Christian Era, the progress southward and eastward and worthward was steady and continuous. The Buddhist faith became the one, pure, civilising influence in Java and Celebes and the adjacent islands, and also in Burma, Siam, and Cambodia. From thence, by different routes, the same religion was carried onwards along the sea border to China, Korea and Japan. The northward movement also, through the Himalayan Mountains, did not die away. It gave the Mahayana—the "Greater Vehicle"—to Western Asia, and at length, traversing the central plateau eastwards, joined hands with the Buddhist missionaries who had been working along the Chinese coast. Thus the whole vast population of Asia, South and East and Centre, became the Buddha land, the Buddha kingdom. Asia was integrated and unified, for the first time in its religious history, from Bactria in the West to the further islands of the East. One Civilisation, with humane ideals, covered this part of the earth's surface.

I have myself seen the marks of this religion in one of the noblest of all its monuments—that of Boro-Bûdûr (the great Buddha) in the Island of Java. There, the history of the whole epoch is recorded in stone carvings of exquisite beauty, which stretch for nearly three miles in galleries of sculpture round and

round the summit of the hill of the Buddha. Pictures are seen of Gautama himself preaching to men and birds and animals—ministering to the wild beasts and to the scarcely less wild tribes of the human race. The far-extended galleries depict the landing of the Buddhist monks, the winning of the aboriginals by deeds of sacrifice and love, the stormy voyages and shipwrecks which had to be undergone, the acts of universal kindness practised towards all living creatures, the spreading of a gracious culture over the earth. It is the glory of this great Migration from India, that it was never stained with blood or with any lust of material conquest.

But why did this religious movement never pass to Africa? What force stopped its course on the Western shores of India, prevented it from going further? We may be quite certain that it was not due to any difficulties of the journey; because such difficulties were the greatest incentives to faith and devotion in the eyes of the intrepid Buddhist monks who indured incredible hardships in other countries and on other seas.

How great a loss this failure to reach Africa was cannot easily be estimated. It threw back, for a thousand years, the civilisation of East Africa,—one of the greatest outstanding tasks still left for civilised mankind to accomplish. Even if, as in Java and Celebes, the effects of the Buddhist migration had not been outwardly permanent, nevertheless its inward result could never have been wholly effaced. The new wave of culture which has come to-day from the Christian West, could have then swept forward without the immense lee-way having to be made up which we find to-day.

It is interesting to notice, that when such a floodtide of religion advances to civilise mankind, it carries with it its own laws of development and also its own limitations. Thus Buddhism, after the first enthusiasm was over, found its stationary level in Asia itself. Christianity was able to penetrate Europe, but its current became choked and blocked with debris as often as it struggled forward into the interior of Asia. Islam again found an easy outlet for its own tidal current in the decaying Byzantine Empire and along the North Coast of Africa, but it failed to pierce through the barrier of Western

Europe except at the extreme point of Spain. We clearly do not yet understand the inner workings of these mighty forces of the Spirit. The words are true of all time: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth ; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

It is now possible to consider, however briefly, a further fact in the relation of Africa to India, namely the rise and expansion of Islam in both countries. To a remarkable degree, after the first great advance of Islam had come to a standstill in Europe, the later trend of this powerful religion has been towards Africa and India. Its main conquests have been in these two areas. The future expansion of Islam is likely to be worked out in India and Africa. Islam has thus become one of these binding forces which link India and Africa together. The bond is likely to become stronger, instead of weaker in the Twentieth Century.

There is one feature in Islam, as it has developed in India, which is of great importance to the future of Africa in its Eastern border. In India itself Islam has been tempered and softened by contact with Aryan Hinduism. The subject is too long for discussion, but the fact may be taken for granted. There should be no serious difficulty, from the ethical and religious standpoint, for a common understanding to be reached between a liberal Western Civilisation and the New Islam of this type.

In the Nineteenth Century, this natural intercourse between the two coast lines of India and Africa, about which I have written hitherto, was suddenly and violently disturbed by the introduction of an artificially stimulated immigration of thousands of Indian labourers, chiefly from Southern India, under a debasing indenture system. The labourers were induced by professional recruiters,—often men of the worst character,—to come out to a country they had never seen and to conditions of life which they had never realised.

This artificial system of recruited immigration was applied, during a period of over 50 years,—with short intervals,—to Natal. Instead of a sprinkling of settlers and merchants coming over each year, who would naturally be men of independent character with the spirit of adventure strong in their blood, the

poorer classes of the peasant population of Madras and North India were uprooted by thousands from their own homes and transplanted to an utterly alien soil. The artificial immigration thus induced led to still further consequences. For Indian traders came over in their train with a new object in view. Instead of seeking to promote the wholesale exchange of merchandise between India and Africa, they settled down in Natal to trade with, and too often to trade upon, the indentured Indian labourers. Thus the natural course of emigration and immigration between the two countries took a different turn,—a turn, I cannot help feeling, for the worse.

In this article I have tried to write a dispassionate account of the age-long action and re-action between India and Africa. It appeared to me that some knowledge of the facts of this background would be needed before a scientific study of the racial conflict which has now arisen could be undertaken. I shall hope to deal with the present situation in a later number.

A DOUBT

To-day my thought is this:
Love never was, nor, in a perfect being, is.
Love is the ultimate song
To be made of this world of wrong.
How, no voice may tell
Out of wisdom's well;
For man is animal yet,
Though his feet be skyward set;—
O savage heart of the world,
O eagle! Who mistook you for a dove?

Jehangir J. Vakil.

THE ROLE OF FEAR IN PRIMITIVE RELIGION

By K. C. Mookherji.

The earliest history of religion began with Animism. We hardly find traces of any religion that preceded it. Animism still continues in the form of nature-religions and in the polydæmonistic beliefs of different tribes. Polytheistic religions that prevail among many civilised nations are based upon it and have developed through traditions. But polytheism gave place here and there to nomistic religions based upon law or holy scripture. This development occurred later than polytheism and should be regarded as a further progress in religious evolution. Still further development takes the form of monotheism which again in logical types of minds, passes over into a kind of philosophy.

Considered generally, the polytheistic religions include most of the Indo-Germanic and Semetic religions, the Egyptian and some others. The nomistic religions comprise Confucianism, Taoism, the Mosaism of the eighth century B.C., Judaism, Brahmanism and Mazdeism. The universal religions are Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammadanism. These are the three periods which must have preceeded one another in the order of religious progress. But in the history of religions it is not to be believed that they are related to one another only in the genealogical sense such as the Vedic to the Aryan, Confucianism to the ancient Chinese religion, Buddhism to Brahmanism, etc., and have remained unaffected by the others to which they are not allied by descent.

With the progress of civilisation and the rapid development of the means of communication sufficient facilities were given to the people to come into contact with one another and thus to imbibe the ideas that developed in different spheres of their actions. So religions, particularly at higher stages, were derived from many different sources though primarily considered, they had as their basis this or that particular prevailing religion without which they might not have been founded.

Now it is clear that religion first of all originated in polydæmonism or spirit worship, then in due course it developed and assumed the nomistic forms and at last culminated in monotheism. Thus we find a progressive march of generalisation in religion from an almost unlimited multiplicity up to unity. It stands now clear that animism is the ultimate basis upon which religion started and them later developed with the intellectual progress of the races. But the various races of mankind differ greatly in their powers of abstraction and generalisation, some can scarcely get beyond the concrete while others can well move in the region of the abstract. This difference of aptitude is expressed in their religions also. So many peoples have never passed beyond polydæmonism. This polydæmonism or animism still prevails in different forms among the existing communities where civilisation has not flourished, but even in higher religions too its numerous traces are found and are explained by Prof. Tiele as 'the survival and revival of the older elements'.

Religion is after all a product of imagination. In the higher forms of religion imagination indeed combines greatly with reason and may at every step be influenced by the experiences in this world; while in the lower forms, particularly in animism, imagination is largely or entirely unrestrained by reference to reality and tends to merge in mere fantasy, where the emotional element is all powerful and the rational element vanishes.

The perceptive experience of our ancestors was not the same as ours. We in our everyday experience try to explain everything in terms of mechanical causation. The primitive mind lacked the proper conception of mechanical causation and of natural law. The only kind of causation the primitive people seemed to be aware of, because of the predominance of volitional and emotional factors in them, was their act of volitional response from the feelings excited in them at the occurrence of striking natural phenomena. They felt and acted in response to the excited feeling to which their belief was due; while their action, as expressed in the performance of rites and ceremonies arising thereout favoured and strengthened that belief. Thus

the idea and the action as determined by the inner working of an emotive impluse promoted by intense imagination formed almost an ideo-motor circuit which, in practice, resisted even the slightest interruption. We therefore find people still believing in the fanciful traditions that the outbreak of epidemics or the occurrence of earthquakes or floods is due to the displeasure incurred by the inhabitants for their crimes or sins of the presiding dieties who are to be appeased by the scrupulous performance of sacrifice and other ceremonies for getting rid of the pest.

People are also found to believe that the mere performance of certain rites with a purpose brings the purpose to fruition. This is simply an affective belief based on intense and excited imagination. So any interruption or change in the rites is believed to invalidate the whole thing, and when this interruption in the ceremonial performance comes from a different community the feeling underlying the affective belief bursts forth with a fury which often results in communal disasters. But the process that forms the emotive circuit of belief and rites becomes gradually strongthened by the general effect of habit, tradition and prejudice. This emotionally constituted ideo-motor circuit becomes gradually dissociated through experiences and a relatively isolated system of religious ideas is formed which resists comparison and criticism and does not even recognise the principle of contradiction. So incompatible beliefs are seen to have been cherished in the animistic conceptions by the people without their becoming fully aware of their incompatibility.

Here their behaviour seems to be similar to that of a child who at one moment sticks pins into her doll, pulls its hair, throws it about, and at the next moment gives it her greatest attention by feeding it and dressing it, as a mother. Primitive men held that plastic images of objects were as real as the objects themselves. The Chinese regard the images of objects as their alter-egos or indwelling soul. The Mandans of North America believe that the pictures are as living as their models. This primitive belief is still prevalent among certain sections of the Indians who refuse to have a picture taken because they think that it will give the man who possesses the picture a power over

them. Primitive people regard the name as real, as a vital part of them, just as much a part of their individuality as their eyes or teeth. So savages have secret names for themselves which must not be known abroad. This is a means of self-protection; for one can gain magical power over another by knowing his name. The primitive man further believed that whatever attached to one's shadow attached to one's self. He believed that to injure anything detached from a man's body would have the same effect on himself. So in case of one's failing to throw his enemy into the fire a lock of his hair is thrown in for the gratification of anger towards him. This is all based on illusory analogy and makes for the foundation of the well-known maxims of magic.

The religious idea that is known as *Mana* reveals still more clearly the immaturity of the primitive mind. If a man's pigs multiply and his gardens are productive, primitive people believe it is not because he is industrious and looks after his property, but because of the stones full of *mana* for the pigs and yams that he possesses. A hunter enchants his weapons casts spells upon his expected prey, wears an amulet or stone round his neck or a tuft of leaves in his belt and at the same time he carefully prepares his weapons, patiently tracks his prey, warily approaches and slays it. But he will not in the least think of his bodily strength and the sharpness of his weapons or of his personal efforts and alertness as causes,—the incantations and spells though contributing objectively nothing to the event will be all important to him because of his imagined belief in their power to bring him supernatural assistance.

This means that some ideas remain so strongly and inseparably associated with certain other ideas that a mental circuit seems to be formed of them and the ideas revolve so rigidly in the circuit that no other idea can come into contact with them so as to expose their absurdity and irrelevancy. It is for this reason that the validity of the observances such as taboos, omens, mimetic and panto-mimetic practices was never questioned by the primitive people but on the contrary they adhered to the traditional beliefs most scrupulously. It is still the practice in India to observe food-rules in daily meals, to recognise the note of a bird or a lizard as indicative of success or failure in some

enterprise and also to follow the panto-mimic magic by trying to bring on rain by spilling water or avenge oneself on the enemy at a distance by self-display.

The peculiarity of these primitive beliefs is due to the intensity of unrestrained imagination people possessed at the time. It was the excited emotional impulse that determined their judgement and so it happened often that they came to believe that things connected in thought were also connected in fact. When the primitive people experienced the world of objects they missed the true perspective of it; they imagined in the objects forces which were stronger than themselves and which they believed to be the determining agents of their destinies. Every striking object that took part in their experience became personified and its activity was explained in terms of purpose and desire. The objects of their experience such as the flash of lightning, the noise of thunder, the destructive power of the flood, etc., no matter whether animate or inanimate, were believed in as mysterious powers having ultimate control over their interest and destinies. So they were to be appeased in order that they might not interfere with their material well-being. They began to think that all their sufferings were due to their indifference or actions displeasing to these forces. And different forms of worship and rituals were introduced to please these fearful agents and more or less a bargaining with them in offering sacrifices developed to avoid their anger.

It was thus that supernaturalism, instead of naturalism came into existence; the world became the world of spirits and not of facts and the instruments that developed to please the spirits were those of magic rather than those of scientific method. Now we shall turn to consider the nature of feeling underlying animism.

When the primitive people failed to meet the pressing needs of life in hunting, love, war, agriculture etc. and grew anxious about such failure but could not account for it, they indulged in unrestrained imagination and believed implicitly that there were mystical powers in ultimate control of the natural events which had to be propitiated so as to make the circumstances favourable

to success in their enterprises. It is still customary in India that *Ganga* the Goddess of water, is to be worshipped in order to avoid any catastrophe during a boat journey, or that Indra, the God of thunder, should be propitiated so that no rain, thunder and storm might cause hindrance in the celebration of a particular ceremony. It was due to the variety of human interests in life that a number of demons or spirits were conceived to preside over them and to direct the affairs favourably or unfavourably according as they were pleased or displeased by the offerings presented to them. So the first ideas of religion arose from a concern with regard to the events of life.

What man fears, but is powerless to control, he seeks to appease. Hence the prominence of devil-worship and of the belief in baleful spirits amongst lower races, hence likewise the persistence of kindred beliefs among the ignorant in civilised countries, hence the world-wide *customs* of averting the wrath of gods or of buying their favour by sacrifices, smearing their images with human blood(1) and wreathing them with human intestines. To this perhaps is due the rise of a social class,—medicine men and priests,—into whose hands all ghostly and ghastly functions fall and who secure dominance over their fellow-men by pretending to be the mouthpiece of the gods, to forgive sins in their name and to make known their will. Thus fear span out all this fanciful imagery, people dreaded harm from every quarter, particularly from things near at hand whose dire effects touched them closely, as the whirpool and the breaker, the falling tree, the devouring beast, the venomous reptile, and all phenomena that were very striking, such as lightning, eclipse, flood and famine.

Polydæmonism had thus its origin in fear, but it is not meant that the place of fear in animism is therefore due to its intrinsic qualities; for it is not in virtue of a particular quality or property that fear is the primitive emotional form of religion; it is not to be understood that elements required for the making of religion can be found only in fear and are not present in other

(1) This is the practice till prevailing in an altered form even amongst some of the people of India who, instead of sacrificing a human being now-a-days, sacrifice a gourd, which with an human image marked on it is filled with red water as a substitute for human blood, before the Goddess Durga.

emotions. The fact is that the circumstances in which the primitive people lived and also the stage of their mental growth were such as to keep fear in the foreground of consciousness. Besides fear was the first of all organised emotions and still to this day it appears first in the young animal as well as in the infant. So the rôle of fear in primitive religion is due to circumstances which make it appear first as a well organised emotion vitally connected with the maintenance of life. It is not improbable that but for the predominant play of the fear-instinct in the primitive mind the polydæmonistic form of religion might not have developed, but it does not thereby preclude the possibility of another form of religion developing in its place.

A question may arise here: Is not the sex-instinct as primitively organised as the fear-instinct, and does it not in any way act in the primitive religions? The sex-theory seems to have first advanced in a spirit of contempt for or hostility to religion and it was then opposed by William James in the Varieties of Religious Experience. But the Freudian school has later ably laid bare the sexual tendencies as working in religion. Of course it is difficult to refute the Predudian doctrine altogether, but it can not be a universal principle for all religion.

At least polydæmonistic religion is not the type of religion which had its origin in a loving reverence for known gods, but on the contrary it began with a vague fear of unknown powers; it is really an attempt to propitiate in dread the evil spirits which represent the most important functions and interests of groups. For awe is the distinguishing mark of this religion. Benevolent spirits were more or less unknown to the primitive people. In the *Origin of Civilisation* by Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock) there is quoted the opinion expressed by Scheinfurth: 'Among the Bougos of Central Africa good spirits are quite unrecognised'. The tendency seems to be that good spirits, being good, will do them good of themselves just as evil spirits do them harm unsolicited. So the primitive people entered into definite relations first with the evil spirits.(1)

(1) In Indian mythology two classes of Gods are found—one being in the form of animals and the other of men. The animal-shaped dieties such as Manasha,

It is only after the gradual development of religious life that the substitution of love for fear may be marked, such as has been occurred in Christianity, Buddhism and other religions. The sex-element even though not actually a factor in Polydæmonism, can not be said to be entirely absent from all religious practices of the primitive people. For the cult of the phallus, the sacred prostitution, and rites of varying degrees of obscenity, prevailed in all primitive civilisations. The deification of carnal love is prevalent still in higher civilisations.

In conclusion we have to observe that Fear, which worked so predominantly in Animistic conceptions does not seem to have been shorn of its entire influence over the religious life of modern civilised people. Dr. Starbusk has pointed out in his statistical inquiry into religious conversion that the central fact in the pre-conversion state is always the sense of sin. And the strong back-ground for the sense of sin is well furnished by fear. Again, referring to storm and stress experiences he says, "Fear comes earliest as was also true in the study of conversion;...The sense of sin is next and comes earlier than the feeling of incompletness." According to Buddhism life becomes a study of destruction of all desire and effort and interest whatsoever. But is there not a fear-element (such as the apprehension of peril to the soul) involved in the complete surrender of the joys of earth? Does not the feeling of fear in regard to physiological cravings become the only incentive for the ascetics or *bhikshus* to adopt extravagant measures that tend to kill the very life they would protect? Do not the horrid pictures of hell and the increased religious tendency in old age point to the same fact?

So Professor Watson remarks "I think an examination of the psychological history of people will show that their behaviour is much more easily controlled by fear stimuli than by love; if the fear element were dropped out of any religion that religion would not survive a year."

Narasingha and others were first worshipped in dread of their evil doings. But the anthropomorphic forms of the dieties were later conceptions. So it seems that unless there was no personification of the diety love was hardly an element in the divine worship.

THE MUHAMMADAN POETS OF HINDI

By CHAMUPATI.

Muhammed Husain Azad has, by means of his Ab-i-Hayat, immortalized a number of Urdu poets. Had he, under every epoch, named a few Hindus, whose share in the making of modern Urdu was no less remarkable than that of their Muslim compeers, says a Muhammadan writer, the antagonism which the Hindus display to this language could have been averted at the very outset. Without expressing any opinion about this statement we are satisfied to find that the Misra brothers, the joint historians of Hindi literature have not been guilty of a similar omission.

Poetry to us appears to be the natural effusion of a deeply sentimental soul through the agency of a language which the poet finds ready to hand. In the choice of his medium he is the least influenced by considerations of religion. The language which he finds spoken about him and which, in the impressionable years of his scholastic career, has imbued his mental atmosphere, is generally the vehicle for the expression of his poetic thought,—with a genuine poet the least controllable of all his thoughts. Real poetry shuns being given an artificial garb in the shape of religion-determined wording. Poets with a mastery of more than one language are rare. Their masterpieces are written in words which flow out of their heart simultaneously with the poetic frenzy which is born therein.

The career of the Hindi language, studied dispassionately, shows that it has been an indigenous growth natural to the soil. Indians, both Hindu and Muhammedan, have immortalized their poetic impulses through the instrumentality of this language of the land.

Chand, the court bard of Prithiviraj, is the first-known poet of Hindi. He belonged to Lahore, whereby the honour of giving birth to the Hindi Chaucer,—whose *Prithiviraj Raso* possesses a high poetic merit which ranks him with the greatest poets of

other languages of his time,—falls to the lot of the Punjab. Among his contemporaries we find Masud who was born about 1123 A.D. and Kutab Ali who flourished about the beginning of the eleventh century. The latter is said to have submitted a petition in verse to Maharaja Jai Singh of Anhalvara lamenting that his mosque had been demolished by the people, whereupon the Raja sanctioned money from his treasury for its rehabilitation. How sweet his Hindi composition must have seemed to this devout Muslim, when that lost house of God was restored to its original magnificence through the beneficent influence of his muse?

In the thirteenth century figures Amir Khusro, whose Persian sonnets are ranked among the classic gems of Persian. Hindi appears to have been his mother tongue. He wrote a Persian Hindi dictionary in verse, called *Khaliq Bari,* from the first Persian word which he affectionately translated as *Sirjanhar.* Some of his love poems contain, like the stanzas of this dictionary, lines worded half in Persian and half in Hindi. The two halves fit in perfectly with each other,—an evidence of his masterly familiarity with the idiomatic usages of both the languages. In homely, everyday Hindi are cloaked his riddles which he propounds in simple easy verses.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century lived Kutban Shaikh who wrote a love story, *Mrigavati,* in verse. Husain Shah, the father of Sher Shah Sur was his patron, from which it is easy to judge how Muhammedans of the time loved and supported masters of Hindi. Simultaneously with him appears to have flourished the well known author of *Padmavati,* Muhammed Khan Jaisi, who chose for his subject the story of the immortal Rajput queen, Padmini. His narrative is full of lengthy accounts of places, persons, and events, from which the reader gets a vivid picture of the conditions of the country and the manner of social and political life at the time. Like an orthodox Muslim he begins his book with praise of God and the Prophet, and the four *imams.* A Muslim of Muslims in religion, he is in language and sentiment an Indian of Indians.

The reign of Akbar in India corresponded to the reign of Elizabeth in England. The regime of both the monarchs was

marked with unprecedented progress in the literature of their respective countries. English produced its Shakspeare and Hindi its Tulsi Das in that prolific era of public prosperity and peace. Akbar himself attempted the composition of Hindi verse. Abul Fazal and Faizi, both gems of versatile lustre, endeavoured sometimes to express themselves in the mellifluous language of the poets of the country. The most renowned of Akbar's *Nava-Ratna* was Abdul Rahim, who though a commander of the forces was also a rare literary genius. His *Dohas* are in poetic merit second only to those of Bihári. His couplets on morality and have passed into proverbs. His knowledge of Pauranic legends is evidenced by his apt reference to Indian myths in his pithy stanzas. For instance, writes he :

Thoro kiye baren kî barî barâî hoy,
Jyon Rahîm, Hanumant ko Giridhar kahe na yoy.

The great are praised much even for their small deeds, as Hanuman (though he too lifted a mountain) is not (like Krishna) called Giridhar.

Rahiman mángat baren kî laghutá hôt anûp
Bali makh mángan Hari gaye, dhari bávan ko rûp.

Rahiman ! even great men, when they beg, are reduced to strange smallness. Hari when he went a-begging to the yajña of Bali, had to assume the form of a dwarf.

Nor did Rahiman remain insensible to the charms of Indian heroes of popular love legends :

Tain Rahim, man apno kîno cháru chakôr,
Nísi básar lágyo rahe Krishn Chandr kî or.

Thou, Rahiman, hast made thy heart a longing *chakor,* which day and night keeps thinking of Krishn Chandr (lit. the moon in the person of Krishna).

In Ras Khan this love of Krishna reaches its high water mark. A Pathan living in Delhi, he is reported to have fallen in love with a banker lad. Overhearing the talk of some Vaishnavas, anent this erotic aberration of Ras Khan, whose infatuation, they said, would be better employed in devotion to

Vishnu, he became inquisitive as to what the latter was. A glance at the picture of Sri Krishna made him a Vaishnavite, and his poems, both in the *Prem-bátiká,* written in 1614, and in the *Suján Ras Khan* are steeped in a spirit of pure love. How deep is the attachment he cherishes for Braj, the land of Krishna's boyhood, may be inferred from the following lines :

Mánus haun to vahî Ras Khán Basaun Braj Gokul gánv gauváran,
Jo pasu haun to kaha bas mero charaun vahî Nand kî Dhenu Manjháran.
Páhan haun to vahî giri ko jo, banyo Braj chhatr Purandar káhan,
Jo khag haun to baserá karaun vahî Kálindi Kûl Kadamb kî dáran.

If man, Ras Khan, I will dwell among the rustics of Gokul in Braj,
If beast, how can I resist the temptation to graze among the cows of Nand,
If a stone, I would belong to that mountain which canopied Braj against the wrath of Indra,
If a bird, I would nestle among the twigs of a Kadamb tree on the bank of the Jumna.

Usman wrote his *Chitravatî* in 1613, Nur Muhammed his *Indravatî* in 1743, and Kasim his *Hans Javaher* about 1840, all these love tales being composed in imitation of Jaisi's *Padmávati. Indravati* borows the very style of Jaisi. It is profuse in its descriptions and depicts a portrait of the period in which it was composed.

Some poets had made themselves familiar with the technique of Indian erotic poetry, and of the Hindu science of love and æsthetics. Mubarak, in 1623, wrote a century of stanzas about each feature of female beauty, *e.g.*, tresses moles, etc. Tahir, in 1621, composed his *Koksár.* Kadir Bakhsh (b. 1578) has left his stray love-stanzas which are highly appreciated. So too are the *Yamak-shatak* of Abdul Rahman (1706) and the beautiful alliterative verses of Mahbub (1704).

Alam and Shaikh are remembered for the romance which marked their marriage. The former, a Brahman, sent his turban for dying to the latter, a Muhammadan dyer-woman. A piece of paper on which was written a line to which another remained to be added to complete the couplet, was by mistake left

fastened in the turban. Shaikh saw it and completed the stanza. Alam was so enamoured of the poetic excellence of her line that he forthwith became Muhammadan and took her to wife. The stanzas that have remained of the passionate couple are all erotic, in which line they are examples of exquisite poetic composition.

Says Shaikh :

Rati ran vise je rahe hain pati sanmukh,
Tinhen baksîs baksî hai main vihansi ke,
Karan ko kankan urojan ko chandhár,
Kati mánhi kankani rahe hai ati laske,
Sekh kahe ánan ko ádar son dîno pán,
Nainan men kájar biráje man basike,
Ere bairi bár ye rahe hain pîthi páchhe
Tamte bár bár bándhati haun bár bár kas ke.

Those that have been in the front of the battle of love, I am rewarding with prizes, smiling :
To my hands I have given bangles, to my breast a necklace, round my waist hangs the shining *kankani*.
Sheikh says, to my mouth I have given the betel, to my eyes ravishing collyrium.
But my treacherous tresses—ah! they remained behind my back. I am therefore fastening them tight, again and again and yet again.

Of royal poets we have already noticed one : Akbar himseif. Pathan Sultan, the ruler of Rajgarh in Bhopal, was another. He lived about 1704.

Taj was a Punjabi poetess. Her language is a mixture of Braj and Punjabi. She appears in her sentiment to have been another Mirábái. Her poems overflow with love of the Cowherd of Gokula, whom she longs to see and adore. Born a Muhammedan, she will live, says she, a Hindu.

In spite of the communal antagonism of modern days which, strange as it may seem, has made itself felt in the field of literature and poetry also, seeking to set apart Hindi for the Hindus, and Urdu for the Moslems, we are not even to-day without a Latafat-Husain who writes his lays in choicest Braj.

As we have said, it is impossible to earmark particular languages for poets belonging to particular communities. Poetry is in fact a wider conception than can be encompassed by a particular clime or creed. It is a profound palpitation of the human heart, the appeal of which naturally overpasses political and parochial boundaries. The poet is true to himself only when he voices the sentiment of broader and deeper humanity. The lingual forms which that sentiment assumes have a necessity to be borrowed from the geographical surroundings which have given his poetry birth, or he would appear an exotic in his native land. His inspiration must be in tune with nature, if it be derived from the mountains and streams, the flowers and foliage, the notes of beasts and birds, that are his physical and mental companions. The Muhammedan poets that love Krishna with the ardour of Vaishnavas do not on that account apostatise from Islam.

Krishna, to the love poet of India, is simply a symbol. In him the votary adores not a particular hero of Indian history, but a human image which the lover lost in love has out of his fancy created. The innocent babe playing on his flute amid the charming sylvan scenery on the banks of the Jumna has ravished the heart of the lover, whether man or woman. Genuine love being a feminine sentiment, the infatuated lover has assumed the rôle of a milk maid. So long as the fact of the infancy of the beloved babe is borne in mind, there is no possibility of any deviation into immorality. The moment this fundamental feature of Krishna's beauty is forgotten, there is a fall in the moral mentality of the adorer.

Taj and Ras Khan appear to us to have been in love with the Indian spirit of spiritual affection. True to Islam in its essence, they are right Indian in their poetic devotion. The poetry of Jaisi and Rahiman is undoubtedly an immortal treasure of Hindi. Their themes are Indian, but the feeling that runs through them is a cosmopolitan heart-beat to which the heart-strings of even the Arab Bedouin must of necessity respond. Of them the Hindu is as proud as the Indian Musalman, as they form an imperishable part of their common Indian culture.

THE MESSAGE

No rent is made there in the mist
by the doubtful dawn.
No struggling streak of light comes through
to gild our cage of gloom.
Yet do not wail with us in pity,
bird whose wings are free,
But soar above conspiring clouds
and cry: I see the sun!

Rabindranath

VISVA-BHARATI BULLETIN.

I.

Dwijendranath Tagore.

[*Read at the Brahmasamaj-Sammilani, Dacca.*]

By Prof. Carlo Formichi.

At the dawn of Tuesday the nineteenth of last January, Dwijendranath Tagore entered the eternal rest at the age of eighty-seven. No death was ever, more than his, the expression of the close of a life of holiness. Hardly a pang, a complaint, could be noticed by the faithful disciple who was ministering to him: sleep became immortal in such a way as to show that between life and death there is no breaking off, no divorce, no loss, no antinomy; but, rather, a continuation, an alliance, a profit,—a harmonious integration. The whole Asram of Santiniketan was in a stir at the news; for *Boro Dada,* as they used to call the Poet's elder brother, was highly revered and deeply loved by everyone.

Throughout the whole of his life he had a great passion for philosophy, and succeeded in being a true philosopher. He was the first in Bengal to study, comment upon and unfold Kant's *Kritikder reinen und der praktischen Vernunft.* Even for Europeans the two treatises of the philosopher of Koenisberg are far from being easily intelligible, and it is a wonder to see how Dwijendranath Tagore could plunge into the heart's core of those two more celebrated than commonly understood philosophical attempts at sharply fixing the limits between what may and may not be grasped by the human intellect; between, namely, science and religion.

Not only Kant, but German philosophy altogether roused the keen interest of the Bengali Sage, who being of a family of geniuses left to his younger brothers and nephews the gift for poetry, music, painting and literary achievements of every kind, and reserved for himself the gift of speculation. He wanted to represent in his family the philosopher, the Sage; and being really a Sage, he enjoyed the authority of a spiritual guide over his younger brothers. He dearly loved Rabindranath whom he considered more as a son than as a brother, owing, perhaps, to the great difference of age; and I am told that Dwijendranath was the only person who refused

to change his attitude towards his brother in spite of his triumph as a poet all over the world. He continued to treat him as a boy ; and it was touching as well as most amusing to hear from his mouth expressions towards the great Poet which were lacking respect as much as they contained love. The two brothers loved each other dearly.

Western philosophy could by no means satisfy Dwijendranath's mind and soul. According to him philosophy had to be lived as a reality ; it had to be experienced as something quite definite and conclusive. In an interview that I was privileged to have with him, I felt the touch of a lofty personality that impressed on me the deepest sense of reverence. A beautiful old man, very like Rabindranath in figure, was sitting on an armchair in the simplest of rooms, on the walls of which lizards were quite confidently climbing up and down. I was at once reminded of what Yeats writes in his Introduction to the English translation of Gitanjali ; namely, that the squirrels had no hesitation in mounting on the writing-table of the Bengali philosopher, and sometimes even on his very arms and shoulders. All kinds of beasts, even the most timid, felt quite secure near him ; and they were right in feeling so, because he protected them on all occasions, as may be proved by numberless instances that his relatives report.

"German philosophy is deep as well as highly interesting," Dwijendranath said after he had kindly expressed to me the warmest feelings of sympathy for Italy, my country ; "but," he added, "German philosophy has not come to any positive conclusion ; and, therefore, I prefer Indian philosophy which never fails to be conclusive. Take, for instance, the Upanishads ; I myself have experienced many of the things expounded therein. Do not apply to the pandits in order to understand the Upanishadic lore ; they will not be able to give you any clue to it. I can help you much better, for I have experienced it."

I was as spell-bound at these words, and looking at the piercing eyes of the Sage, I felt as if I was living thousands of years ago in the good old times of *rishis* and prophets. We consider ourselves lucky and happy whenever we dig out of the soil an ancient gold or silver or brass coin ; we are awe-stricken before the remains of an old temple or pillar ; and it is easy to imagine how almost crushed I felt in the living presence of a genuine Upanishadic seer. After all, a human soul is the most precious thing in the whole range of Nature, and India especially has got the privilege of preserving and offering to humanity not only old coins and temples, but pure holy souls that are faithful reproductions of those

wonderful ancient saints who from the far-away land of the past beacon to us, who sail on the stormy waves of the present age, and show us the path to salvation.

Dwijendranath Tagore was an ancient seer living in the twentieth century.

I am told that his notes on the Bhagavadgîá are a most valuable and original contribution to the understanding of the text. It seems that he had a theory of his own concerning the three *gunas,* the constituents of *prakriti,* and that the whole Sânkhya-system will find an enlightening commentary as soon as the manuscripts of the sage find their way through the press. A publication that should comprise all Dwijendranath's writings would be most welcome and would fill many volumes, for during his long life the Sage's philosophical and literary activity never stopped and was simply stupendous. He started, also, as it is well known, an important Review that kept alive for many years the spiritual and intellectual interests in Bengal and in the rest of India.

On the very eve of his peaceful death, Dwijendranath composed a brief poem that he read to his friends there, at Santiniketan. He was also reading with eagerness Gorresio's introduction to the Râmâyana, that I was translating from Italian into English, just to please him. That he was a true philosopher is evidenced also by the unfitness he showed for all practical and worldly transactions. So far as money was concerned, he was just like a child, and one had sedulously to defend him from being cheated. As flies run where honey is, so poor as well as designing people were always surrounding him. He could never deny assistance and help.

A man, who was in want of money, once called on him under pretence of discussing a philosophical point. The end of the visit betrayed his true aim: the man asked for money. Dwijendranath chancing to have no money at hand was ready to part with a tricycle that had cost him five hundred rupees, in order to give the man the opportunity of getting fifty rupees by its sale. The disastrous bargain was avoided only by the timely intervention of one of his relatives. On another occasion he divested himself of a woollen garment, in order to keep warm a servant who, according to him, was not dressed so as to be efficiently defended from the rigours of the cold season. This also was a liberality practised at his own expense, for when he went to bed, he, for the night at least, had nothing warm enough to replace it.

I am reporting these details because I am convinced that, far from

being idle, they allow us to have before our eyes the figure of the Sage just as it was during his most edifying life.

Yes, Dwijendranath Tagore's figure is and will ever be before our eyes, because life in his hands was a chisel that did not engrave on sand or water, as it so often is with men, but on gold that knows no tarnishing, no wear.

II.

Farewell Address to Prof. Carlo Formichi

BY THE FOUNDER-PRESIDENT.

DEAR FRIEND,

The happy time of our meeting in Santiniketan, in the atmosphere of rich leisure and peaceful co-operation, has at last come to its end, and your departure from our midst draws near. The very few weeks that you have been able to give us contain in them a full harvest of friendship that in the normal course of things would require the sunshine of a lifetime to mature. I know that our scholars here, with whom you worked, and who have come to appreciate heartily the value of the help you rendered and of the kindness you showed to them, will always remember you with grateful admiration. Your scholarship has most impressed us for its living and luminous quality of imagination ; we have realised that your study of Indian culture does not merely reveal a scientific mind, but a personality full of sympathetic insight. Having the noble modesty of the truth-seeker, your unbiassed mind could come into intimate touch with the ideal India, with all that is immortal in her of beauty and truth. Your discriminate appreciation has helped our students in directing their loyalty to the best that India has achieved in her intellectual and spiritual adventures,—loyalty which is needed for the building up of a fruitful future on the promise of a fertile past.

In your own nature you have brought to us a gift which is not merely an outcome of a studious, scholarly training, but something native to the kindly soil of your mother country. It is that generosity of heart which has the magic power of bidding open the door of the inner sanctum of an alien race. I shall always remember the happiness of those days which we shared together when profuse welcome was lavished upon us by the springtime in the eastern districts of our province, when all along our path we were repeatedly roused by the loud greetings of colour from the

extravagant *kinsukas,* from the *asoka* groves, blossoming with wistful reminiscences of a far-away lyric age in India. It made me feel proud of your companionship when I realised how easily your own accommodating kindliness found its way into the hospitality of our people, across the natural boundaries of unaccustomed habits and manners.

Your arrival in our *asrama* was accompanied by the gift of an Italian library from your country, surprising in its magnificence. It has already aroused in our students a desire to honour it by owning it truly, thereby directly reaching that great source of inspiration which, in a period of new birth in European history, brought out such a variegated luxuriance of intellect and art on the western continent. This library has been a generous invitation to our people by your country to the feast of soul in that guest-house of hers which is open to all time and to all humanity.

You were a worthy bearer of this message from four own land.; but being a true lover of India, you must also act as messenger on our behalf in carrying our assurance to Italy that this friendly beckoning of hers has given a permanent direction to our mind in its communication with herself. And all this is in accord with the ideal of Visva-bharati which, as you know, is to realise the freedom of pathway along the vast realm of man, widening our consciousness of the unity of spirit in the different human races. Your genial presence among us, the valuable service you have rendered to our *asrama,* the precious token of sympathy you brought to us from your country and the masterly exposition you gave us of the gradual course of the spiritual illumination running through the period of Vedic India, has greatly strengthened our cause, creating a strong link with Italy in our bond of human solidarity.

In this connection I must mention the name of your former pupil, Dr. Tucci, who is still with us and for the loan of whose services I cannot enough thank your government. He has studied with an amazing comprehensiveness, along with most of the other phenomena of ancient Indian culture, the greatest period of India's history ; he has pursued the triumphant career of Buddhism in distant countries, following almost obliterated indications across the sand-buried antiquities, among the records of a startled history that has lost the memory of its own language. He can best remind the modern children of India of what has been the most glorious self-revelation in the annals of their ancestors. That was her ideal of universal sympathy,—made uniquely real in the relationship which India at one time established with the neighbouring and distant countries

through her self-conquering messengers, unarmed and unafraid, without greed and devoid of material means,—the ideal which urged one of her mightiest emperors in the heydey of his power to transfer the progress of his conquest and the expansion of his empire from the political to the moral plane.

It is our desire to proclaim this richest birth-right of ours as Indians, our faith in this *dharma* which enjoins every man to realise, through the cultivation of *maitri,* the truth of his own self in the Truth which dwells in the All. You who come as a voice from across the seas giving harmony to the voice of the Eternal in the aspiration of India, you who allow us to realise in yourself the spiritual kinship of love and disinterested service,—you have helped us in this dark age of international suspicion and jealousy to light our lamp, which is dedicated to the divine spirit of *maitri,* acknowledged by Visva-bharati as the true ideal of India. And, therefore, our farewell to-day contains within it the deeper silent welcome of all days to our world of endeavour which will always carry in its heart the memorial of the best that your own life has offered to its creation.

Before we part, allow me to say that my relation with you is not merely through the cause I cherish in our institution. It is warmly personal and is intimately associated with my love for Italy and with the exuberant welcome which I received from her. If, owing to my increasing weakness and ill-health, I am prevented from claiming her hospitality ever again, her touch will always remain with me in the many relics of our meeting and the permanent representation you leave behind in the *asrama* of the treasure of her thoughts and dreams, and of the large-heartedness of her people.

III.

Prof. Formichi's Parting Address.

King of poets,—my friends,

If my departure should mean a breaking off of my relations with Visvabharati, this hour would be the saddest in my life, for it would imply a last farewell to persons that I most revere and dearly love and to intellectual and spiritual interests that have become one of my highest and most cherished aims for the rest of the years I have still to live.

No, this my departure is not an end: it is a beginning; it is not a sunset: it is a sunrise; it is not a farewell in the sense of our Italian

addio, but rather a welcome to the starting of a most active and intimate collaboration for the achievement of our common ideals.

I am going to Rome in order to prepare for Rabindranath Tagore a reception that has to assume the greatest cultural importance. This great man of yours, that nations vie with each other in glorifying, must find in Italy his second fatherland. Among nations Italy must be for Rabindranath his last love. It is commonly said that the first love is always the sweetest. It is an error: the sweetest love is the last one. The visit *Gurudev* intends paying to Rome and to other Italian cities is, therefore, full of hopeful possibilities.

I am going to Rome, then, in order to secure that Tucci's mission may be prolonged as long as possible. Besides the interest roused in Santiniketan for the Italian language and literature, a whole programme has been devised of Buddhist researches on the basis principally of Tibetan and Chinese texts. The alliance of the young gifted Italian scholar with the eminent pundit Vidhusekhara Sástri and his disciples is likely to make of Sántiniketan the first centre in the world for Buddhist studies. In the months that I have lectured at Sántiniketan I had the incomparable satisfaction of seeing the ultimate results of my studies on the development of Indian thought from the Rigveda down to Buddhism, unanimously approved by such distinguished scholars as Vidhusekhara Sástri, Kshitimohan Sen, and other learned pundits. The ten lectures will appear in the Visvabharati Quarterly and then in a volume. A dearer bond cannot be imagined between Visvabharati and myself. My lessons, moreover, on the Buddhacharita have induced the pupils that followed them, to give India a new and more conected edition of Asvaghosha's masterpiece. And this is another bond between Visvabharati and myself. While I shall be in Rome the seeds I have sown in the most fertile soil of Santiniketan will gradually grow into plants that will bear blossoms and fruits, and never will sower experience more affectionate and tender anxiety than I for the ripening of his seeds.

You are, perhaps, eager to know what I think about your institution and the improvements of which, according to me, it is still susceptible.

I have already expressed my opinion on Visvabharati in a speech I delivered at Dacca and which I shall hand over for publication to the eminent Editor of the Modern Review, Ramananda Chatterjee. I am glad to have expressed that opinion before I received in Santiniketan the farewell of both teachers and disciples. The farewell-ceremony was full of

such deep gratitude and of such sincere and spontaneous love, that I was needs moved unto tears. After that ceremony I feel I can no longer be impartial towards Visvabharati. I have become partial, I look at all your concerns with the eye of a lover. Therefore, it was a lucky thing that I said about Visvabharati what I had to say, while I was still in the mood of an objective and impartial observer.

Dear friends, I thank you all heartily for having called me to India. You have allowed me to insert in the history of my life the most interesting pages, which tell, also, of my most intense joys and satisfactions. The peaceful work in the *ásrama* at Santiniketan ; the privilege of being near the Poet, of listening to his inspired words and of enjoying the touch of his lofty personality ; the acquaintance made of so many high souls among teachers and disciples ; the gorgeous sunrises and sunsets and the most suggestive landscapes inviting in West Bengal to religious meditation and in East Bengal to a kind of intoxicated passion for earth, water, plants and beasts ; the simplicity of Indian life and the bounty of the people ; Indian customs and ceremonies faithful to a remote, venerable past ; the glory of the ruins of Sarnath and the unique charm of holy Benares ; these, and so many other impressions I am going to entrust to a book which has to contain the best of my heart and of my soul.

I thought the farewell-ceremony in Sántiniketan had closed the manifestation of friendly feelings towards me. But, here in Calcutta, you representatives of Visvabharati, are honouring me again in the most flattering way. Especially your words, *Gurudev,* confer on my life a price I should never have anticipated before, and I devoutly hope that my Mother from heaven may hear them and bless me.

What I wish you, cannot be expressed through words: they would certainly spoil the depth and sincerity of the admiration devotion and love you inspired in me ever since the first day I had the privilege of coming near you. This only I can say, that when I am near you, I feel nearer God.

IV.

Visva-bharati.

By Prof. G. Tucci.

In a Mahâyána Buddhist text it is said that once Buddha, absorbed in the meditative calm of *samádhi,* projected from his divine heart a luminous ray which embraced the worlds and filled with light and *maitrî* the

suffering and struggling creatures. And a thrill of joy ran through the souls, weapons were laid down, hate was quenched, love smiled forth its blessing.

This parable, which has a profound significance, teaches that love is not possible without purification and consecration of the spirit. First it is necessary to merge our ephemeral and illusory personality—of the petty individual of contingent life,—in that wider individuality which is no longer the antagonism of individual against individual, but a fusion of all the *egos* in a superior synthesis. Only thus may our true being find its significance, its justification, and enable us to love without distinction or limitation, to diffuse our spiritual wealth which has its joy only in giving.

From Santiniketan, which was the Maharshi's retreat for meditation, Visvabharati had to come.

Visva-bharati is not a mere research institute, albeit one of the highest value. Though as a devoted and zealous priest of science, I cannot help admiring the precious library which it is gradually collecting, the every-day work of research which is accomplished in the serene, austere silence of its halls, the rare learning of the professors who flock to it from every part of India and of Europe,—none the less I should be doing injustice to *Gurudev* if I only devote my attention to the scientific value of the Institution.

Science is not wisdom: she speaks to the intellect, not to the heart: we all know men of superior intelligence who are unable to hear or understand the harmonies of art or poetry ; who fail to be touched by the mystery of the night that watches over us with its myriad of stars; who are deaf to the ineffable voice with which Nature speaks to us through her dawn and her sunset. In our education there is an opposition between the spiritual and the intellectual life,—an antimony that we cannot solve and from which is derived that tragic unrest which dominates our modern culture. And in the void of our life we feel sometimes, with deep anguish, the admonition of Sanatkumára to Nárada; our heart echoes the rebuke of Hamlet that there are more things in the world than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

Visva-bharati seeks to put into practice the fusion and the interpenetration of intellect and heart ; for no idea is full or perfect until it reaches its realisation in practice. Our children learn formulas and precepts and schemes, and meanwhile live their lives subject to the tyranny of such programme under the severe discipline of their masters. But never does

the tree love freedom more than when it is young. Never is the heart more full of joy than when it is simple.

Laotze says that the great sages, the perfect men, are like children and therefore they alone can understand children. *Gurudev* caught the cry of sorrow of childhood suffering from a system of education which was nourishing neither their mind nor their body ; and he came back to the educational ideal of ancient India, to that free school,—which reminds us of the humanistic school of Italy that grew and prospered round the *guru*, —wherein the individual is no longer subjected to an external will, or to the rigidity of a programme, annihilating personality within the dark uniformity of their generalisations, but which allows of an autonomous development of mind and spirit ; whereupon in the heart of the children is born that which alone can give life, namely *ánanda*.

Freedom and *ananda* are the two fundamental principles of the educational ideal of Tagore : that is what he has put into practice in Visva-bharati, where the student is living his own life, not only in contact with books, but also with his own soul, and with Nature,—a nature infinitely serene as it is in Santiniketan, divinely eloquent in the solitude which inspired the meditations of the Maharshi. It is evident that, in this atmosphere, the teacher is no longer the disciplinarian master who imposes formulas and facts, but the friend and companion in the mutual realisation of the same ideals. This community of ideal is derived from the unity of inspiration which originates from the Poet himself, who represents the central point of the magic *mandala*, which is the creation of the *maitrîbalam*, the force of love that animates him.

There are some aspects of our personality which are too often neglected by the strictly scientific Western mentality. Art and music are the necessary complement of the instruction imparted in Visva-bharati. There it is not mere science which chains us to material facts,—it is the realm of art in which imagination and feeling are free to expand and where man no longer reflects but creates. Moreover we also find,—a thing rare with poets who are usually accounted dreamers,—the particular importance given by *Gurudev* to the Institution specially designed for practical service. I mean Sriniketan.

This Sriniketan is a marvellous institution, which if widely adopted should prove to be of the greatest utility to the Indian people. It represents the rehabilitation of the simple and industrious life of the fields, of the villages in which Indian civilisation grew and developed. Towns, un-

healthy in body as well as spirit, threaten to destroy the country. Let us, therefore, come back to our fields, but furnished with the means which science supplies, in order that the soil can be made more fertile and respond with greater generosity to our loving care.

India needs food ; and, in order to obtain it, the agricultural system must be perfected. Sriniketan is an example which shows the path that should be followed, while representing at the same time a centre of cohesion and unity. An unhealthy individualism has come to reign destructively over communities and villages. It is necessary to diffuse the principle of co-operation, to teach hygienic rules, to struggle against malaria as well as against moral impurity. Mother Earth is generous in giving help to her children ; but she loves those best who take constant care of her. Properity she is not lavish of, but allows it to be gained by those who know how to work for it. Sriniketan represents the centre of this vital and fundamental idea. It is an expression of the far-seeing love of the poet for the children of his motherland.

Last but not least, Visva-bharati transcends India. You have a proof of this in our own presence here. Visva-bharati is the link of connexion between the Oriental and the Occidental worlds. Both those are great, but they do not yet love each other, because they do not understand each other. Each tries to live its own life, thus very often exaggerating those very characteristics which render more difficult all possibility of accord and collaboration. And for ourselves, let me frankly say that it is we, obsessed by the ephemeral illusion of the wonderful conquests of our science, who are too often obstinately forgetful of that wealth of greater value,—the eternal and the inalienable wealth of the spirit.

Gurudev is not an exclusivist. He wishes to bring the peoples into contact, because beyond and above the various peoples there is Humanity, there is Man, not an abstraction, but a living reality. And he seeks to realise this *rapprochement* through the world of culture. In Santiniketan you find representatives of all nations, from Japan to Italy, from Tibet to Holland. And you also find the beginnings of that collaboration which every man, who hopes for a better future for the world, looks forward to as an accomplished fact. Through the world of culture this reciprocal understanding has begun, without which reciprocal love is an impossibility.

THE MORN
RASAKATHA

PREFACE BY
Dr. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE TWILIGHT
RUPAKATHA

DAKSHINARANJAN'S

DREAM-LANDS OF BENGAL

= বাংলার =

THE DAY
BRATAKATHA = কথা-সাহিত্য = THE NIGHT
GITAKATHA

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